

AN ASSESSMENT OF THE INFORMATION AND MEDIA NEEDS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES IN CAMBODIA



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These organisations supported the formation of community consultation teams and supported their capacity development to undertake consultations and data collection. In Ratanakiri, there were 25+ people in such teams. Two or three people from each province of Battambang, Kratie and Kompong Thom attended capacity development activities in Ratanakiri prior to going back to their provinces to form their own community consultation teams, usually of 5 – 10 people. These groups then conducted community consultations. Similar consultations teams also undertook the work in Mondolkiri, Kompong Speu and Stung Treng provinces, supported by people from Ratanakiri.

The community consultation teams were supported by a support group of indigenous NGO staff. A much wider array of local and international NGOs provided comments on drafts of the report, as did UNDP Asia-Pacific Regional Centre in Bangkok.

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Foreword by indigenous peoples in Cambodia

This report is about us – indigenous peoples. We have done a lot of the work for the report. We have done community consultation in villages in 7 of the 15 provinces of Cambodia where indigenous peoples live.

This was a good thing to do. We found an interest in information systems has helped us and our communities analyse media systems. Now we see we are living in the dark. Life without access to enough information is like life without access to enough food or land. The problems of lack of access to food and land have already started for indigenous peoples in Cambodia. There are also the issues of weakening identity and solidarity in our communities. What is important to addressing these issues is access to appropriate information.

This is especially so for women, elders and youth. These groups currently have low access to information. But it is these groups that represent the stability and future of our communities. We cannot expect communities to be empowered if these groups are excluded. All groups in communities, but especially these groups, need access to information that is relevant to our needs.

But these issues are *our* issues. We need to solve them. Community ownership is extremely important. We have some information and media already, but the decisions and priorities are often made by outsiders. Some of this information is appreciated, but we also need indigenous society to make and manage media. It needs to be our media. We need to make decisions about priorities. This is important not just for information within communities but for information coming to communities from outside.

The use of our languages is also important. Some communities or parts of communities do speak Khmer. But indigenous languages are part of our identity and our way of life. As we are experiencing so much change, it is important we have the stability and identity from using our own languages. In some cases, where indigenous languages have almost been lost, it is important to us to re-build pride in and use of those languages. It is like re-building pride in our identities.

So we welcome this report and welcome any discussion that can come from it. We recognise that it not only contains the results of our community consultations - it also has a lot of information and analysis of the larger context. This has been collated by the authors. We welcome that. It is important that we have a full discussion and understanding of the issues.



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Mr. Chheurt Chhorn
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Ms. Ven Samin
Souy woman, Kampongpeu



ASIA INDIGENOUS PEOPLES PACT

An Organisation of Indigenous Peoples Movements in Asia

Foreword by Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP)

Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP) is an alliance of indigenous peoples' organisations in Asia. After many years of neo-liberal development being imposed on us resulting to resource alienation, displacements, and erosion of our indigenous identities, we have formed AIPP as the channel of building our solidarity and cooperation to defend our collective rights, our dignity and identities.

We also found that solutions to most issues lay in communicating and working together. No solidarity can be gained without communication – and that communication needs to be empowering.

That empowerment needs to not be just for indigenous peoples, but to the most marginalized and vulnerable indigenous groups. Indigenous cultures have been under great stress – and that stress has been increasing with rapid changes. It is women and elders, as well as youth, who are most impacted and also most marginalised. They are also the groups important to social cohesion necessary to deal with change.

What this report shows is that elders, both men and women must have a leading role in decision-making, with the active participation of youth representatives. This applies not just for information and media systems, but for almost all development issues, and in most countries, certainly in Asia. These groups, and the larger social systems they support, are the corner stone of indigenous identity. They are key to the future for indigenous peoples. It is, therefore, essential that information and media systems cater for their needs – and that indigenous media be driven by them.

But this not enough - mainstream media systems must be sensitised to the issues, rights and perspective of indigenous peoples. Indigenous peoples need to have access to the mainstream media systems in order that our voice is heard. If those systems do not know and understand our issues, we lose our voice and consequently lose the public support to our plight in defence of our land and our identity.

The needs within a country are clearly indicated in this Cambodia report. However, at the Asia regional level, indigenous peoples in the many countries need to learn from each other and support each other. While many language barriers exist, we must work toward a system that allows for that sharing. An Asia indigenous peoples media and information system is clearly needed to complement those systems within countries.

We welcome this report from Cambodia as we welcome similar reports from Laos, Nepal, Philippines and Indonesia (as well as a regional report by UNDP). The situation for indigenous peoples in Asia is indeed challenging but there are many opportunities from which can all learn.

Ms. Joan Carling,
Secretary General, Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP)

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Executive Summary



Cambodia is recovering from an extended period of conflict including the murderous Khmer Rouge regime of 1975 – 1979, followed by a period of communist government. Now, as with most posttransitional situations, there are many challenges. In 2009, 35 percent of Cambodians still live below the national poverty line (the poverty line deemed appropriate for a country by its authorities) of \$0.45 per day¹.



Indigenous peoples in Cambodia are mostly farmers, with a focus on rotational upland farms

Also, embedded within a larger-scale neo-liberal development environment, there are many challenges to developing democracy and rule of law. While voters in such systems must ideally retain oversight of their government, the ability to do so depends to some degree on information systems, and on empowerment.

This report looks at the situation with regard to information and media services for Cambodia's indigenous peoples. It examines whether existing services meet the needs of indigenous peoples, allowing them to be active participants in governance of their local areas and of the nation.

Indigenous peoples in 7 provinces of the 15 provinces with indigenous peoples were consulted through a series of consultation forums. These forums were structured to be participatory, reflective of the collaborative nature of Cambodia indigenous communities, which place a high value on building consensus and solidarity through communication.

Participation in the consultations was enthusiastic and productive, indicating that the forums themselves were empowering by providing community members with the opportunity to communicate their ideas and concerns, which they quickly embraced.



Many development models being used in Cambodia define "development" as industrialisation and plantations.

The forums revealed deep concerns over natural resource alienation, lack of access to education and health services as well as a critical shortage of accurate and independent information.

Land alienation, particularly disputes between marginalized communities and powerful interests, was the most frequently expressed concern and there was a consensus that it had reached a critical stage. Participants also agreed that a lack of access to reliable, accurate information was driving a fragmentation of communities.

But people were also enthusiastic about potential opportunities to access existing and

¹ [UNDP Human Development Report](#) 2009.

new communications channels (primarily radio and audio newsletter) to speak with each other in their own languages.

Word-of-mouth remains an important communication medium for most indigenous communities. This is because many people do not have access to other forms of media or other forms of media are in a language they do not understand well. Mobile phones are becoming common in indigenous communities. This was noted to greatly promote word-of-mouth communication, but differentially supports local authorities, men and youth: women and elders with far less access to mobile phones.

Radio reaches most, if not, all communities. Most radio stations, however, are in Khmer language, not indigenous peoples' languages. This furthers the marginalisation of women and elders who speak less Khmer.

A small daily local language radio program exists for 4 languages in Ratanakiri province but, illustrating the importance of community involvement in content decisions, many communities in the provinces commented that the service did not strongly meet their needs.



Radio remains a major source of outside information for most indigenous communities. Television is largely absent or power supplies expensive

Television generally remains of low significance to indigenous communities. This has been due weak reception, content not being seen as highly relevant and a lack of cheap electricity in most villages.

DVD players are sometimes present in villages and there have been some interesting pilot programs for indigenous language video production. The vast majority of DVD's in communities are, however, karaoke and action movie videos.

With very low levels of literacy in most communities, print media plays a very small role and is largely absent from most communities. The exception to this is printed information coming to local authorities, or to people (mainly men) interacting with NGOs. Great variability was reported in the degree to which this information was transferred on to others. Often it was not passed on to others in the community.

With regard to having a voice, Cambodia's indigenous communities consulted said they are largely absent from print, broadcast and digital media. All indigenous groups reported a lack of access to media to voice their concerns. They also expressed the belief that their communities are ignored, and that their lack of access to media may be symptomatic of this. One key exception to this is the radio stations transmitting, in Khmer language for an hour or two a day, from outside the country – Radio Free Asia, Voice of America and ABC Radio. These stations are regarded as providing a voice and incoming information that is not filtered by authorities and more highly matching the needs of communities, especially related to natural resource management issues.

Of particular note in this whole environment is that there is no community-owned or operated media outlet for indigenous people in Cambodia. Indigenous communities, through the consultative forums, however, expressed a strong desire for media that they could operate themselves. They stressed a profound desire for the appropriate use of their languages to overcome barriers and to support their indigenous identity.

Community media that supports the development of indigenous peoples' civil society is, therefore, recommended as a priority action. Local language audio and video media could be produced by community groups, distributed by community focal people, and broadcast if possible.



An indigenous Por elder in Phnom ray village, Battambang. Whilst the only indigenous village in the province, it maintains strong culture and traditions

Community media forums could be expanded and be held at the local level to help accomplish this. If properly structured, such forums can be used by communities as tools for empowerment.

Expanding community voices in more mainstream media is also required. Indigenous communities are eager to have greater access to open forums, radio programs, and even content production for national radio and television, and they are ready to learn how to accomplish this. Communication for empowerment models are critical here because they

reinforce the expressed desire of indigenous communities that many of the decision-making processes (in regard to content, for example) should be based within their communities.

However, communication for empowerment is complex. The root causes of issues such as land alienation appear strongly linked to development models and forms of governance currently in place. Neo-liberal, market-led development, in many instances supported by the international community, act as an impediment to community empowerment by promoting rapid resource extraction and undermining democracy. It is therefore difficult to envisage improvements at the community level without significant changes to a larger social and political environment that marginalizes indigenous peoples. Indeed the most important question for the international community may not be what they can do to help, but, what they should stop doing (in order to help).

Still, indigenous people participating in the forums enthusiastically embraced potential opportunities that would give them greater access to communication channels, especially if they could decide the content.

This too presents challenges. More appropriate resourcing options need to be developed to support indigenous peoples' communications projects. Many current funding and management processes within donors, UN agencies and NGOs lack flexibility and creativity, being symptomatic of communication and management processes that do not stress community empowerment. However, a number of social development co-financing NGOs are leading the

way with approaches to “peoples-led development,” and these offer a model for supporting communication for empowerment for indigenous peoples.

If such models can be developed, and the root causes of disempowerment of indigenous communities can be addressed, digital communication offers a viable way forward. Audio media production in particular has become relatively cheap and easily made.

Following the community consultation forums for this report, pilot audio media projects have commenced. It appears that indigenous communities at local level can produce their own audio programs in



Consultations with elders in La Ok commune, Ratanakiri Province. Consultations were undertaken in 7 selected provinces.

their local languages and those programs distributed by memory devices. For this, it is important that community structures and processes are supported. Such processes and structures also need to provide for women and elder with a strong and majority voice in the management of media production (in recognition of their greater marginalisation).

There is also much work to be done in creating or maintaining “space” and support for community media in Cambodia. The general media environment is regarded as controlled and not free. Many observers note a closing of democratic space and increasing restrictions on freedom of speech. These are, of course, even more reason to appropriately support and promote communication for empowerment and community media.

For supporting communications for empowerment and community media great care needs to be taken in order that programs actually be empowering. To achieve this, funds should be channelled through co-financing NGOs specialising in empowerment and social development support, especially those with a focus on social media. Donor systems such as those of bi-lateral agencies or UN agencies could fund to such NGOs, thereby more easily allowing community level decision making and community action learning (as opposed to standard linear approaches to planning). Such a NGO funding facility could support:

1. Local level indigenous content production and distribution in order to offer indigenous peoples direct experience of media production and management. Such efforts should be considered precursors to ‘graduation’ into higher level community media.
2. Indigenous people producing or advising content for broadcast on ‘mainstream’ radio and television, and increase local language content in existing media.
3. Production by established media content production agencies/organisations, if they are operating in genuine partnership with indigenous peoples, community forums, media fairs, and content for radio, television, audio devices and mobile phones.
4. Capacity development for government radio stations in the field of community media and community prioritised media.
5. Technical support and linkages between initiatives.

More generally there is a need for UN agencies, donors, NGOs and community stakeholders to discuss the findings from this research, finalise recommendations and develop a coordinated approach to assisting indigenous peoples for media and information

Topic	Key Provisional Recommendations
Media Environment	<p>All stakeholders should work with government to increase government exposure and receptivity to community media and communication for empowerment in general. Many in government would welcome the opportunity to see different models of media. For example many government staff working in the ministry and departments of information could support community media if they were more aware and exposed to it.</p>
Awareness raising on communication for empowerment	<p>The video produced as part of the consultation should be rounded out with material from all areas consulted then prepared in a way that provides access to the issues to a wide variety of people, including indigenous peoples who do not speak Khmer.</p> <p>Pilot projects to develop actual experience in community media should continue so that community media is visible as a viable alternative to non-community media. The experiences in these pilot programs should be well documented.</p> <p>Experiences of community media and communication for empowerment from around Asia (and more widely) need to be documented and made available to all stakeholders in Cambodia, including indigenous community people who do not speak Khmer. A series of cross-visits within Asia is highly recommended.</p> <p>Information sessions and workshop should be conducted with a broad range of NGOs, community groups, development agencies and with government.</p>
Community Media	<p>Donors and development programs should support and enhance existing community media initiatives as a balance to media more “owned” by NGOs, corporations and party-political influences. A diversity of and engagement with media is an essential step to further building an understanding of the role of media in indigenous society.</p> <p>Support the establishment of indigenous peoples’ organisations or projects to support peoples-led and community media. This, however, needs to be done carefully, in a way that explores the nature of indigenous peoples’ management and communication systems, attempting to maximise indigenous cultural traits in such organisations and projects. An initial step could be the establishment of “elders” councils as Boards, with people experienced in not only indigenous systems but the non-indigenous systems that are present in NGO management.</p> <p>Community media should be allowed to focus on the development of community decision making, recognising that, women and elders should be given a lead role in community media. To complement this, indigenous youth could engage in media production, as active members of the community</p>

<p>Community media cont....</p>	<p>operating in partnership with other age groups.</p> <p>It is, however, recommended that any community media have a focus on language survival, indigenous culture and subjects such as the Millennium Development Goals. To start of hot and contentious issues would only attract aggression and result in resistance. It is, however, it is noted that a focus on community culture and non-contentious issues has actually been successful in supporting community solidarity, a factor important in preventing contentious issues arising (eg. by preventing illegal land selling by individuals in the community or by holding commune authorities to account).</p> <p>Promote audio media at local level in the form of “audio newsletters”. Video could be supported at district level or above. Different distribution channels for media, including memory devices and broadcasting, should be considered.</p> <p>Support, through appropriate NGOs and appropriate funding mechanisms, the capacity development of indigenous peoples in the field of media production, including legal aspects of media and voice.</p> <p>Support the establishment of indigenous language dubbing studios to allow indigenous media to be open to non-indigenous peoples and allow non-indigenous media of priority to indigenous communities to be dubbed into indigenous languages.</p> <p>Support community-organised media fairs for indigenous peoples. These could be held at a number of different levels (district, provinces, inter-province) and be used for sharing of any forms of indigenous media content and approaches.</p> <p>Support Open Forums in indigenous languages. Recordings of such forums could be distributed to indigenous communities.</p> <p>Support indigenous peoples to conduct field days and forums on topics selected by community media, to be held in villages and farms, allowing indigenous peoples interested in exchanging ideas to do so in an informal and semi-structured way.</p> <p>Support field trips and exposure visits to build government and community understanding of community media models in Asia. The focus on these should be on developing acceptance for more diverse media ownership.</p> <p>Support linkages between Cambodian indigenous peoples and indigenous people’s media and peoples’ movements in Asia and other regions.</p>
<p>Media literacy</p>	<p>Continue with a program of community consultations on media systems and needs is also required. Such a program will assist in raising awareness of media issues and further develop “media literacy” and analysis.</p> <p>A general educational program on media literacy and the role of media in society is also required.</p>
<p>Mainstream Radio and television</p>	<p>Support indigenous people to use mainstream radio and television to build a greater awareness of indigenous issues in non-indigenous society. This would mean supporting indigenous peoples’ groups to analyse non-indigenous people’s perceptions of indigenous peoples and identify key actions/messages</p>

	<p>to address stereotypes, misunderstandings and gaps in knowledge.</p> <p>The Ratanakiri Provincial Government Radio is recognised for supporting indigenous language content. It requires consistent funding and technical support from an NGO experienced in working with other radio stations.</p> <p>Develop and implement training on indigenous culture and issues for Cambodian journalists. This would require joint analysis of media perceptions of indigenous peoples followed by awareness raising on key issues. One method could be to conduct forums between international media journalists and civil society groups (community groups and NGOs). These could also be used as a way of improving media relations skills of these civil society and indigenous peoples group (by better understanding of international and national media systems and needs). Already many media agencies have expressed a desire to raise indigenous issues but note a lack of information in a format appropriate to their needs.</p>
Appropriate resourcing	<p>Encourage development agencies to channel funds to NGOs and co-financing organisations that have developed systems for supporting “peoples-led development”.</p> <p>Complement mainstream development planning and reporting processes with action research approaches.</p>
Linkages with non-indigenous peoples.	<p>Promote communication for and between the many other marginalised peoples of Cambodia. In fact, the majority of people in Cambodia are marginalised. An isolated sectoral approach needs to be avoided. Community media needs to be supported for both indigenous peoples and non-indigenous peoples.</p>
Development models	<p>There needs to be a review of development models and programs in Cambodia. Programs such as the Greater Mekong Subregion program are a major root cause of disempowerment and disenfranchisement of indigenous peoples. They establish a neo-liberal market-led approach to development in an environment of low governance and low resource security. Development agencies interested in empowerment of indigenous peoples (including indigenous peoples groups) need to advocate against such models raising the awareness of their impacts on indigenous peoples.</p> <p>Indigenous peoples themselves often see the impacts of such programs but are left in the dark as to the existence of the plans and development models themselves. Communication for empowerment initiatives should support indigenous peoples to analyse these programs.</p>



Introduction

Cambodia

Cambodia is located in South East Asia bordering Thailand, Lao PDR and Viet Nam and with a land area of about 181,035 square kilometres. Estimates of Cambodia's population range from 11 million to 14.8 million people, with approximately 90 per cent of the nation's population being Khmer ethnicity - complimented by Vietnamese, Cham, Lao, Chinese, and indigenous ethnic groups.



- Population: 14.8 million (UN, 2005)
- Capital: Phnom Penh
- Area: 181,035 sq km (69,898 sq miles)
- Major language: Khmer
- Major religion: Buddhism
- Life expectancy: 52 years (men), 60 years (women) (UN)
- Monetary unit: 4000 riel = US\$
- Main exports: Clothing, timber, rubber
- GNI per capita: US \$320 (World Bank, 2005)
- Per cent indigenous people: 1.3% (2008 population census - indigenous mother tongue)

Cambodia is a country transitioning from a protracted civil conflict that destroyed its physical and social infrastructure and left up to one-fourth of its population dead. During the Khmer Rouge regime, from 1975 to 1979, millions perished while the regime pursued its radical vision of transforming the country into an agrarian utopia. The country's professional and technical classes were virtually exterminated.

Pol Pot was ousted by Vietnamese forces in 1979 and a new pro-Hanoi government was installed. In 1991, the UN, Cambodia, and other parties came to an agreement and the United Nations Transitional Authority (UNTAC) and a Supreme National Council (SNC) were formed. In 1993 Cambodians voted in a royalist party, FUNCINPEC, but the Cambodian People's Party, who won the second largest number of seats, refused to surrender power. A compromise was reached and a government was formed with two prime ministers. Norodom Sihanouk became the king once again, after ratifying a new constitution which re-established the monarchy.

The tentative compromise between the FUNCINPEC and the CPP fell apart in 1997. Hun Sen, the CPP co-prime minister, organized what many say was a violent takeover, and replaced Prince Ranariddh with another member of the FUNCINPEC. In spite of this takeover, the elections of 1998 took place. Hun Sen's CPP won the election, but the opposition parties accused him of voter fraud. However, Cambodia was able to regain its UN seat, lost nearly a year earlier as a result of what some describe as Hun Sen's coup.

Elections in July 2003 resulted in a stalemate: none of the parties won the two-thirds majority required to govern alone. Almost a year later, in June 2004, Ranariddh and Hun Sen agreed to form a coalition, with Hun Sen remaining as prime minister. In August, Cambodia's parliament ratified the country's entry into the World Trade Organization. In October 2004, King Norodom Sihanouk announced that he had abdicated and selected his son, Prince Norodom Sihamoni, to succeed him.

In 2008 an election was held, with the constitution amended to remove the need for a two-thirds majority to govern (a simple majority now sufficed). This resulted in the Cambodian People's Party winning a majority and forming the government without a partner.

Throughout much of this period, the Khmer Rouge was still present in some western parts of the country. The government, however, finally ended what was a long and extended period of war. Pol Pot died in 1998. On December 29, 1998, the remaining leaders of the Khmer Rouge apologized for the 1970s genocide. By 1999, most members had surrendered or been captured. In December 1999, Ta Mok and the remaining leaders surrendered, and the Khmer Rouge effectively ceased to exist.

Over the past decade, Cambodia has been experiencing rapid economic growth. International Monetary Fund (IMF) data says growth was "10.8 percent in 2006, 10.2 percent in 2007, and an estimated 6 percent in 2008" (McCargo 2010 p2). The transition to a market-based economy was rapid and the role of private investment increased dramatically, as did aid from countries such as China, Korea and Vietnam.

Amidst these changes has been a growing concern over what many see as growing human rights abuses, especially those related to land and natural resources:

... Hun Sen's CPP is getting away with a disturbing range of political abuses. Cambodia's elite is quietly enriching itself, grabbing huge tranches of land across the country. Community leaders, labor activists, and critical journalists who challenge the CPP face threats, intimidation, and sometimes violence. (McCargo 2010).

This adds to the situation where, in 2009, 35 percent of Cambodians still live below the national poverty line (the poverty line deemed appropriate for a country by its authorities) of \$0.45 per day and where Cambodia's Human Development Index rank was 137 out of 182 countries included in the UNDP Human Development Index². While, between 1993 and 2004, the number of people living on less than \$0.45 per day fell from 47 percent to 35 percent of the population³, during the same period, per capita consumption of the richest 20 percent of the population grew by 45 percent, compared to a growth of 8 percent for the poorest 20 percent.

Also, census data indicates that only 26.4 per cent of Cambodian households use electricity as their main source of light; 33.7 per cent have a toilet facility within their premises; 47.0% have access to improved water sources and 83.6 per cent still use firewood as their main type of fuel for cooking⁴



While there has been rapid economic development in Cambodia, especially in urban areas, many indigenous peoples (and others) have seen unchanged conditions or even growing poverty related to dwindling resources.

2 UNDP Human Development Report 2009.

3 World Bank poverty assessment, February 2006.

4 General Population Census of Cambodia 2008 - Phnom Penh, National Institute of Statistics, Ministry of Planning, 2009.

Communication for empowerment for indigenous peoples

Article 16 of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) adopted by United Nations General Assembly in September 2007, states indigenous peoples should have the right to establish their own media:

- *Indigenous Peoples have the right to establish their own media in their own languages and to have access to all forms of non-indigenous media without discrimination.*
- *States shall take effective measures to ensure that State-owned media duly reflect indigenous cultural diversity. States, without prejudice to ensuring full freedom of expression, should encourage privately owned media to adequately reflect indigenous cultural diversity.*

This report examines the issues facing indigenous peoples in Cambodia, and then discusses the potential for communication for empowerment for indigenous peoples. It notes that “disempowerment” is a fact of life for indigenous communities, but does not jump to the conclusion that empowering through communications alone is enough to change this situation. Some questions the study attempted to answer are:

- What are the major threats Cambodia’s indigenous people face and what are the underlying causes?
- What media and information do indigenous communities currently access?
- Who produces the media and who decides its content?
- How is information distributed or broadcast to indigenous communities?
- What communication projects already exist for indigenous peoples?
- Is media and information currently received by indigenous communities appropriate, in terms of language and content, especially in relation to community needs and priorities?
- Which groups within communities receive least information and why?
- What level of opportunity do indigenous community people have to express themselves through the media?
- What is the state of indigenous people’s representation and involvement in democratic governance?
- How can information and media be made more appropriate and accessible?
- What are the future options for delivery or broadcast of information to indigenous communities?
- How can development agencies best support communication for empowerment programs for indigenous peoples?

To gather information, teams of indigenous peoples were supported to develop a set of interview questions and conduct focus group discussions in selected communities in seven provinces: in the northeast, Ratanakiri, Mondolkiri, Stung Treng and Kratie; in the centre Kompong Thom, in the west, Battambang regions and in the south, Kompong Speu.

The first stage of each village consultation was a village meeting to explain the program and to ask what groups were present in the community. In most cases, the following groups were identified:

- Elders
- Local Authorities/ committees
- Older women
- Female Youth
- Male youth

Focal group discussions were then held with each of these groups. These group discussions often lasted for one day prior to village level discussions to compare results and observations. At the village level discussion, a summary was produced.

In Ratanakiri province, in 4 communes, consultations in a first village led to the wish to consult with all other villages in the commune. This was done then a commune level workshop held to compare results between villages. For more explanation of the process see Appendix 2.



Women's discussion group in La Ok village, Ratanakiri. Teams of indigenous interviewers received training then conducted the interviews in indigenous languages

This report also assesses the larger public and privately owned mass media environment, especially in light of literature examining the connection between media and power structures. Arguments made by Chomsky and Herman (1998) about how the American and international media “manufacture consent” also provide a lens for viewing Cambodia’s media market. They also validate the key requests made by indigenous peoples during the consultative forums: for indigenous media ownership, access to information and freedom of expression.

The report provides, in the first section, background on indigenous peoples in Cambodia, history and contemporary issues, including the state of representation of indigenous peoples in Cambodia.

The second major section describes the media and access to information for indigenous peoples.

A third section describes the current digital communications environment for indigenous peoples.

That is followed by an explanation of indigenous peoples’ participation, access to media and information at the local level. This summarises the case studies that appear in Appendix 3 and discusses a number of the opportunities and challenges for communication for empowerment.

A conclusions and recommendations section summarises then proposes suggestions for priority actions.

A traditional wooden water tower stands in a rural village. The tower is built from tall, thin wooden poles and has a large, rounded, thatched roof made of woven bamboo or similar natural materials. A wooden staircase leads up to a platform on the tower. In the background, there are several traditional wooden houses with thatched roofs, some with corrugated metal roofs, and a blue building. The sky is blue with scattered white clouds.

The context for Indigenous Peoples in Cambodia

Indigenous Peoples of Cambodia⁵

In Cambodia, indigenous peoples are recognized separately to Khmer people and other peoples, such as the ethnic Lao living in north-eastern Cambodia, who are not generally considered “indigenous”, nor are the Cham or Vietnamese. However, the concept of indigenous peoples is not totally clear-cut and Khmers (the dominant ethnic group) living in some areas share some characteristics with indigenous peoples.

The indigenous peoples of the highland areas, however, can be distinguished from their lowland neighbours not only by their long-standing inhabitation of the remote upland forest areas but also by their distinctive religion, which is associated with their environment, and by their use of swidden (rotational farming) agriculture techniques based around their long-inhabited communities (White, 1996).

Pre-French colonisation history involved raids of indigenous villages by Khmer and Siam slave traders (Baird, 2011). Following Cambodia’s independence in 1954, government policies sought to integrate indigenous peoples into mainstream Khmer society. This involved the expropriation of indigenous lands, some villagers were forced to work on plantations and several indigenous communities were relocated along rivers and roads. The Khmer language was taught to help transform indigenous people’s “backward” social systems, something which met resistance and occasionally led to clashes and armed confrontations (Bourdier 2009, Colm 2009).



A typical village in Ratanakiri with traditional bamboo clad houses. Nowadays many houses are clad in wood.

The coming of the infamous Khmer Rouge saw another assimilation program. Entire villages were resettled to lowland areas. Speaking indigenous languages, traditional rituals and tradition were forbidden. Some indigenous communities fled to neighbouring countries (Colm 2009).

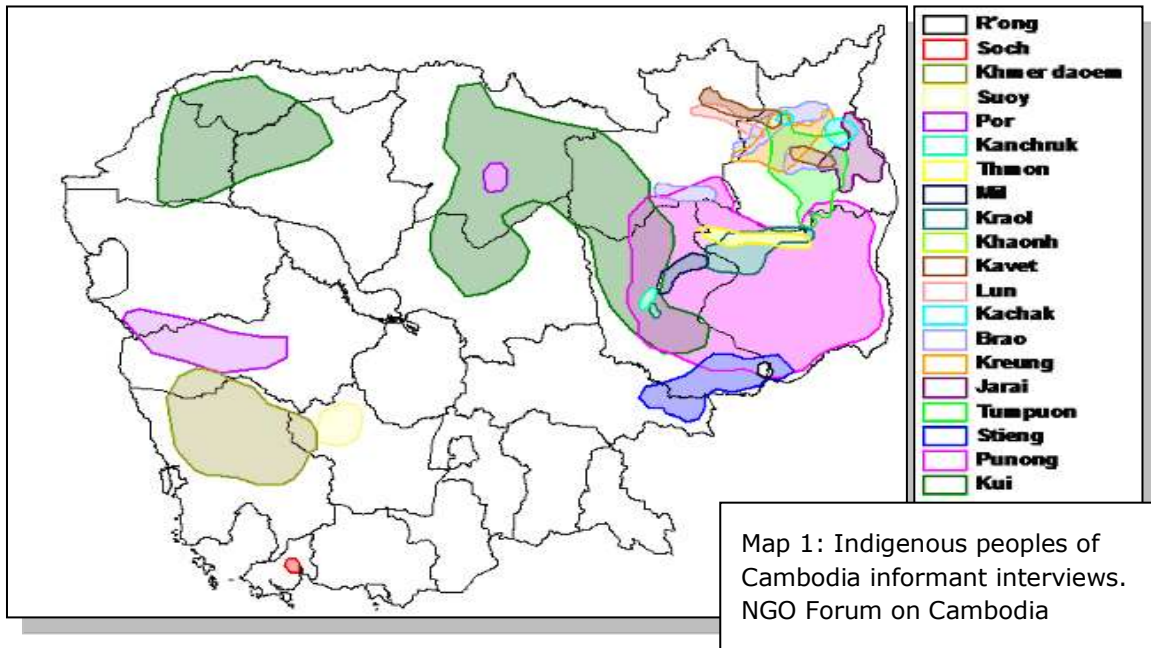
After the defeat of the Khmer Rouge, displaced communities returned to their ancestral lands. However, the 1980s again saw government policies to integrate the indigenous communities into the mainstream Khmer society (Erni 2007, Colm 2009).

Nowadays, indigenous people still generally live in widely-dispersed villages that frequently have only a few hundred inhabitants, governed by a council of local elders and/or by a village headman. They are involved in cultivation of a wide variety of plants. Rice as the staple food is planted extensively, with some groups practicing wet rice cultivation while other groups grow only upland rice planted on their rotationally cultivated “swiddens” (farms). Their diet is supplemented by hunting, fishing, and gathering edible plants, seeds, fruits and vegetables from their nearby community-managed forests. In recent times cash cropping has added to family incomes.

⁵ The Rights of Indigenous Peoples In Cambodia: a report to the United Nations Committee on the Eliminations of Racial Discrimination 76th Session, 2010, Submitted by Indigenous People NGO Network (IPNN), Coordinated by NGO Forum on Cambodia, In cooperation with Asian Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP). February 2010.

According to the 2008 population census, the total population of Cambodia is 13.5 million and about 1.34 percent of the total population (about 179,000 people) reported an indigenous language as a mother tongue. The total indigenous population, however, is understood to be greater, as a number of indigenous people are not able to speak their people's language or do not yet feel confident saying they are indigenous.

Indigenous communities are located in more than 15 of Cambodia's 24 provinces. A 2006 study of the indigenous population by the Ministry of Rural Development, National Statistics Institute and Commune Database found that indigenous groups living in 10 provinces. However, according to working groups of indigenous peoples, there are five more provinces where indigenous people are living. Because of the discrepancies in data the NGO Forum on Cambodia, with its members, has prepared a draft map of indigenous peoples in Cambodia (map 1).



The territories of some groups go beyond the Cambodian border. The Jarai in Ratanakiri, and the Phnong in Mondulakiri and Kratie, may be found respectively in the provinces of Pleiku and Dalat in Vietnam; the Kuy, present in Preah Vihear and in Kampong Thom, are also found in Thailand and in Lao PDR; and the Brao and Kravet, in Ratanakiri and Stung Treng, are related to those in southern Lao PDR.

In 2004 the first ever national gathering of indigenous representatives from 14 provinces discussed what it is to be indigenous. In a statement they produced during this forum they described what it means to be indigenous in Cambodia (Appendix 1). People placed high emphasis on identity coming from ancestors, traditions and way of life. While some groups no longer speak their indigenous languages, they maintain they still retain their indigenous identity.

With regard to legal recognition, the Cambodian Constitution (1993) states that all citizens have the same rights: regardless of race, colour, language or religious belief. Indigenous peoples are regarded as citizens of Cambodia and do not face the same citizenship issues as in some other countries in the region and world.

The rights of indigenous peoples, as general citizen rights are also supported through Article 31 of the Constitution, which states that Cambodia shall recognize and respect UN rights covenants. Cambodia is a signatory to a number of international instruments that protect the rights of indigenous peoples,⁶ as well as the Convention on Biological Diversity (1992), which recognizes the role of indigenous people in protecting biodiversity. In 1992 the Cambodian Government ratified the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. This includes the rights to practice specific culture and the right to means of livelihoods.

In addition, the Cambodian Government voted in favour of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) in the UN General Assembly. The UN committee on the International Covenant on Elimination of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) states that the UNDRIP is the appropriate interpretative tool for analyses of the rights of indigenous peoples. Cambodia became a party to the International Covenant on Elimination of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) in December 1983 but has not ratified the International Labour Organisation Convention number 169, which concerns indigenous and tribal peoples' rights in independent countries⁷.

Education Issues

For indigenous peoples, the Government has made efforts to introduce bilingual education into 20 government-run community primary schools in the three north-eastern provinces: Stung Treng, Monduliri and Ratanakiri. In 2009, the Ministry of Education commenced bilingual education in 5 state schools in Ratanakiri Province with plans for expansion. The programme will also include 80 readers in different languages to be used in formal education.⁸



A lower secondary school at Bousra commune, Monduliri province.

However, indigenous peoples in Cambodia still face great difficulty accessing education. A recent study in Monduliri Province found 97 percent of Bunong women and 86 percent of Bunong men were unable to read or write Khmer⁹. There is an urgent need to address such divides in access and provision of education in indigenous peoples' areas.

Health issues

The health status of indigenous peoples and ethnic minorities remains well below the national average. The under-five mortality rate in Monduliri and Ratanakiri provinces, both of which have majority indigenous populations, are double the national average: 165 deaths per 1,000 live births compared with the national average of 83 deaths per 1,000 live births.¹⁰

⁶ This includes the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People and more generally the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

⁷ Local observers comment that this is not likely in the foreseeable future.

⁸ Civil Society Submission to the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in Cambodia, 2009.

⁹ International Cooperation Cambodia, 2003: An Assessment of Khmer Language Skills and Literacy Levels within the Adult Hill tribe Population of Monduliri Province. International Cooperation Cambodia, Phnom Penh

¹⁰ Cambodia Demographic and Health Survey (CDHS 2005)

The right to health and well-being, according to the World Health Organisation (WHO), not only means being free from disease but also having access to preventive health education and counselling.¹¹ Here, language barriers and cultural discrepancies between indigenous people and public health service providers form major obstacles. Money, transportation, language, discrimination, low levels of education and traditional beliefs/obligations have all been cited as the barriers to accessing health services and information.¹²



The Health Centre in the provincial centre of Ratanakiri. Most health services are located in major centres but access and services in villages are low.

The health situation, particularly with regard to information, is perhaps best illustrated by the cholera outbreak of 2010.¹³ This epidemic started in April 2010 in Kompong Speu and Kratie provinces, then spread to all district in Ratanakiri. By August 3, there were 1,937 reported cases and 38 deaths in Ratanakiri province. Indigenous communities were hardest hit: all those who died were indigenous people.

At the beginning, the outbreak was defined as Acute Watery Diarrhoea (AWD). This was despite samples testing positive for cholera since the beginning of the outbreak and World Health Organisation (WHO) guidelines stipulating notification of cholera after only one positive sample. Only after two months from the start of the outbreak was it announced that the outbreak could be called *cholera* – but only for health education purposes. Government reports and media were told not to call it cholera, as the official government position was to call it AWD. This decision was followed by the WHO in all its public communication. NGO staff say this was done to protect Cambodia's tourism image, but contributed to the spread of the disease by down-playing its importance¹⁴.

Forest Issues

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) states that indigenous people have the right to the territories they have traditionally owned or otherwise occupied or used, including the lands, waters and other resources therein. In contravention of these standards, the Forestry Law (2002) deprives indigenous peoples of these basic rights by stating that all forests are the property of the state. This is further compounded by the Land Law (2001), which fails to include significant areas of forest estate traditionally managed by indigenous people into communal land titles, further reducing the nature and scope of indigenous peoples' ownership rights to their territories.

¹¹ Preamble to the Constitution of the World Health Organization as adopted by the International Health Conference, New York, 19-22 June, 1946; signed on 22 July 1946 by the representatives of 61 States (Official Records of the World Health Organization, no. 2, p. 100) and entered into force on 7 April 1948.

¹² Personal communication with Health Unlimited staff, Ratanakiri provincial office

¹³ From a report sent to UN Special Rapporteur on Indigenous Peoples Rights by Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact, August 2010

¹⁴ From a report sent to UN Special Rapporteur on Indigenous Peoples Rights by Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact, August 2010

The Protected Area Law (2008) is another law which provides indigenous peoples only with user rights as opposed to ownership rights. The Protected Area Law also only allows for customary user rights in specific zones determined by the Ministry of Environment, and furthermore specifies that “local communities and indigenous people cannot obtain land title over farm land in community protected areas.”¹⁵ In addition to this, large areas of lands are being excised from “Protected Area” to be converted into agro-industrial concessions.¹⁶

Land issues

For agricultural land, the Land Law (2001) provides for collective land titling of indigenous lands. This is a positive inclusion and the Cambodian Government should be applauded for this.

However, an additional Sub-Decree for the procedures to title indigenous land was not adopted until 2009. The sub-decree is also considered by many to be overly bureaucratic, inconsistent with the Land Law, and containing clauses undermining indigenous people’s rights to collective land as recognized under international standards.

The Land Law does specify protection against violations of the agricultural lands of indigenous minorities in the *interim period* before titling of that land. However, there has been massive alienation of indigenous peoples’ lands. Economic Land Concessions have been issued over large areas of indigenous peoples’ lands. Most of these can be interpreted as being issued contrary to Cambodian law.



Land alienation – the loss of tenure over traditional lands – is a major concern of indigenous communities.

Extract from: *Economic Land Concessions in Cambodia, A Human Rights Perspective*, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for human rights in Cambodia, 2007.

“...essential pre-conditions to the grant of concessions, such as the registration of land as state private land and conduct of public consultations and environmental and social impact assessments, have not been met...”

“The report raises particular concerns about the impact of economic land and other concessions on indigenous communities, whose rights to collective ownership of land are protected under Cambodian law. The alienation of indigenous land through the grant of concessions is undermining the ability of indigenous communities to register their collective ownership of traditional lands, and enforce their rights to land under the Land Law.”

Military or law enforcement occupation of land restricting access of local communities’ to resources has escalated and in some cases companies have been reported to have requested armed protection from the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces (RCAF) to guard their investment.¹⁷

¹⁵ Protected Area Law (2008), Article 26.

¹⁶ The Rights of Indigenous Peoples In Cambodia: a report to the United Nations Committee on the Eliminations of Racial Discrimination 76th Session, 2010, Submitted by Indigenous People NGO Network (IPNN), Coordinated by NGO Forum on Cambodia, In cooperation with Asian Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP). February 2010.

¹⁷ Letter sighted addressed to provincial authorities and the Forestry Administration requesting armed guards to protect a site in Kratie for rubber plantation development.

Anarchic land grabs have also resulted in evictions of indigenous people from their lands, some forceful, others involving coercion. Community people widely report that, during land disputes, government officials have told them that indigenous peoples' land is state land, that indigenous people have no rights to it, and they have two options – settle now, or risk losing the land in the future without any compensation.¹⁸ In most of these cases the outside agencies obtaining land are



Land clearing in Kompong Speu Province. Economic Land Concessions have resulted in a dramatic loss of indigenous peoples territories

influential and powerful people or companies, connected with government officials, military or police forces. One high-profile case, Kong Yu village in Ratanakiri province, involves a person who is the sister of the Minister of Economy and Finance and wife of the Secretary of State for Land Management. This case continues to be unresolved after more than five years of litigation on behalf of the affected community. The courts have repeatedly failed to act on the case.

Mining

Although the extractive industry is a relatively under-developed sector, nearly 100 known mining or exploration concessions have been issued throughout Cambodia; many in protected areas, or overlapping with indigenous peoples' lands.¹⁹ Any exploration or mining license granted on traditional indigenous land that impedes the community's ability to continue to manage the land according to their customs could be considered in violation of the Land Law, particularly if consultation has been lacking.²⁰

There are numerous reports of companies with exploration licenses moving on to extraction activities in indigenous areas before the legal process (including the Environment Impact Assessment) has been fulfilled.²¹ These factors not only create a significant barrier to the investigation of a mining operation's compliance with the law, but also nullify indigenous people's rights to effectively understand mining activities conducted upon their land.²²

¹⁸ NGO Forum on Cambodia (2008): Progress Report for Key Trigger Indicators of the Poverty Reduction and Growth Operation Programme (PRGO), Round-2.

¹⁹ NGO Position Papers on Cambodia's Development in 2007-2—8: Monitoring the implementation of the 2007 CDCF JMIs and the NSDP, November 26, 2008. Annex on the Environmental and Social Impacts of Expansion of the Extractive Industries Sector.

²⁰ 2001 Land Law, Article 23

²¹ "Extractive Industry Mining Study, Social and Environmental Impacts in Ratanakiri and Mondulakiri", DPA June 2008.

²² UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People stating Article 32 and www.sithi.org

Hydro power dams

Added to mining issues are hydropower dam issues. Many proposed hydropower dam projects are to be located along rivers inhabited by the country's indigenous peoples, posing a direct threat to their culture and livelihoods. The proposed dams are largely located in the following three areas of Cambodia: along three tributaries of the Mekong in the northeast, along the Mekong River mainstream, and in the south-western mountains of the country.

In the northeast, beginning as early as 1996, members of more than 10 indigenous groups in Ratanakiri, Mondulkiri and Stung Treng provinces experienced devastating socio-economic, cultural and environmental impacts from a cascade of hydropower projects being built and operated on the rivers upstream in Vietnam and Lao PDR. In May 2008, a new project-development agreement was signed for a dam located on the Mekong mainstream in Laos, near the Lao-Cambodian border. In April 2011 a decision is expected on the Xayaburi Dam in northern Laos. If approved, it will be the first Lower Mekong mainstream dam and is expected to have trans-boundary impacts affecting the livelihoods of fisherman and IP communities in Cambodia²³.



Hydro electricity dams on rivers flowing in to Cambodia have been added to by commencement of many dams within Cambodia. Many are within the territories or affecting the territories of indigenous peoples.

Large dams are also currently being studied on the north-eastern rivers and along the lower Mekong River mainstream inside Cambodia. These dams will likely change the ecosystem of the Mekong River, negatively impacting on the rich fisheries that are the major protein source to all of Cambodia, and involve the re-settlement of tens of thousands of people.

In the southwest, five hydropower dams have been approved since 2006, for construction by Chinese companies, many of which are located in highly sensitive eco-system areas and territories of various indigenous groups (NGO Forum on Cambodia 2010).

Some Underlying Issues.

The situation for indigenous peoples in Cambodia is, to a large extent, the result of its political history and the economic development paradigms. In an environment of weak rule of law, market-based and neo-liberal models of development fuel the liquidation of indigenous peoples' resources (and resources of other marginalised groups).

²³ International Rivers Coalition per comm

Indigenous peoples face serious and urgent problems including the violation of our collective rights as indigenous peoples, oppression by states, development aggression and plunder of our land and resources by multinational corporations and international financial institutions in collusion with the local elite.....

We believe that the root cause of the enormous problems we face today is the neoliberal global capitalist system, which puts profits before people and the planet.

Declaration of Solidarity from the International Conference on Indigenous Peoples Rights, Alternatives and Solutions to the Climate Crisis, November 4-9, 2010, Baguio City, Philippines

For Cambodia, this is evident in regional development plans supported by the government and many agencies within the international community. An example is the Greater Mekong Subregion development program.²⁴

Priority infrastructure projects worth close to US\$11 billion have either been completed or are being implemented.

The program has contributed to the development of infrastructure to enable the development and sharing of the resource base, and promote the freer flow of goods and people in the subregion. It has also led to the international recognition of the subregion as a growth area.

The program places economic development zones over indigenous peoples' domains. They also promote large infrastructure projects that are part of the industrialisation model that many say are responsible for widespread environmental destruction and climate change (TEBTEBBA 2008). This has all been done without meaningful consultation with indigenous peoples.

It should also be noted that in many cases such projects are framed in term of "poverty reduction". But as Ironside (2009) notes in his study on achieving Millennium Development Goals in two indigenous communities in Ratanakiri province, the reverse is often the case:

The government hopes to reduce the poverty of these groups and bring them into the mainstream of the country's development process.However these centrally developed, standard poverty reduction strategies and targets do not take into account consideration the needs of marginal, indigenous groups to maintain their identity and self-determination in the face of relentless change.

In Cambodia, 10-15 years of economic growth and international assistance has not resulted in any significant poverty reduction for the majority of the population living in remote provinces, where the majority of Cambodia's indigenous peoples are found. Indications are that for these indigenous groups their poverty is deepening and is likely to continue to do so.

These programs support major development programs in an environment of known corruption, poor governance, and, most importantly, in an environment of low land and resource tenure security. Under such conditions, rapid development generally results in large-scale abuse of rights and land alienation. Indeed, a system of corruption and abuse of rights is supported by this model of development that prioritises economic growth over issues of environmental and social sustainability.

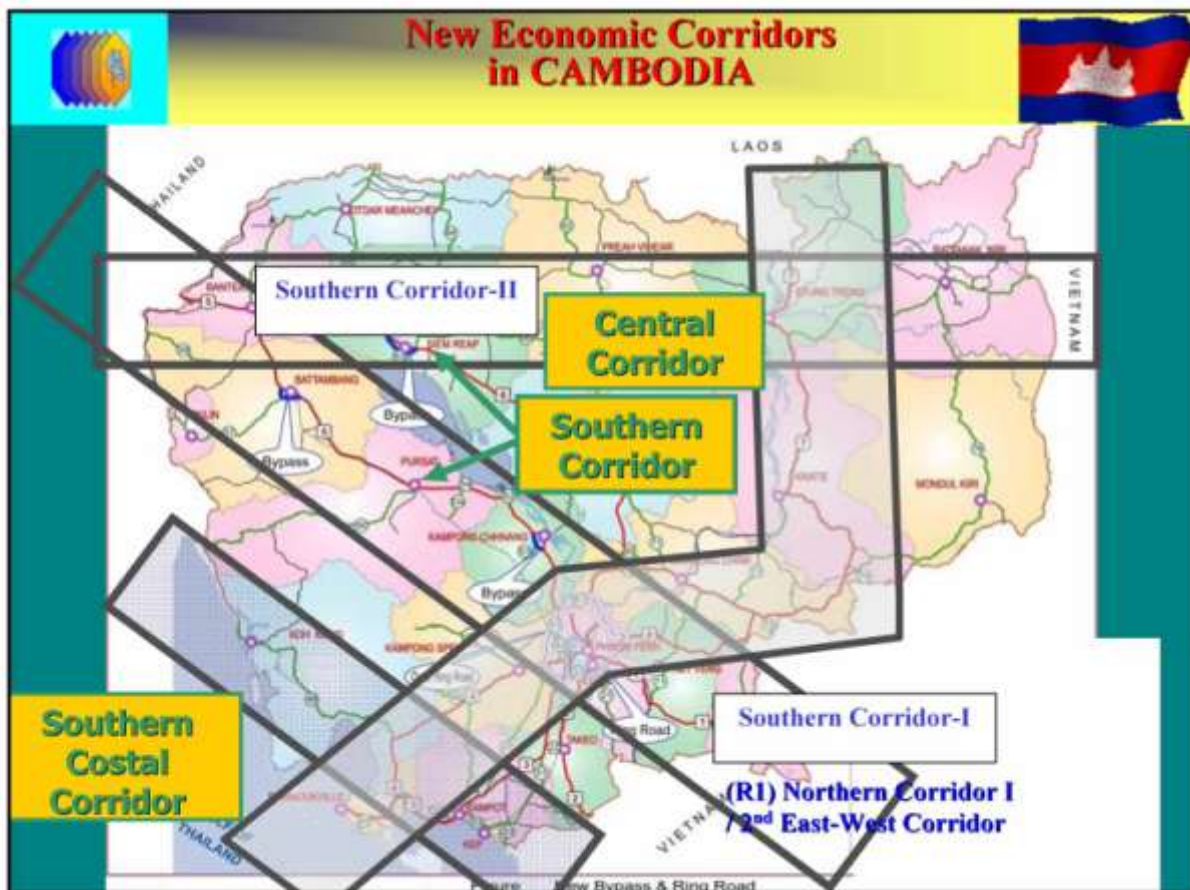
As Singer (2009 p 138) explains:

²⁴ <http://www.adb.org/gms/>

“Neoliberal policies explain why authoritarianism and violence remain the principal modes of governance among many ruling elites in posttransitional settings. the promotion of intense marketisation is revealed as a foremost causal factor in a country’s inability to consolidate democracy following political transition.”

This is also an issue linked to donor influence. Caroline Hughes (2009), in her book “Dependent Communities: Aid and Politics in Cambodia and East Timor” explains:

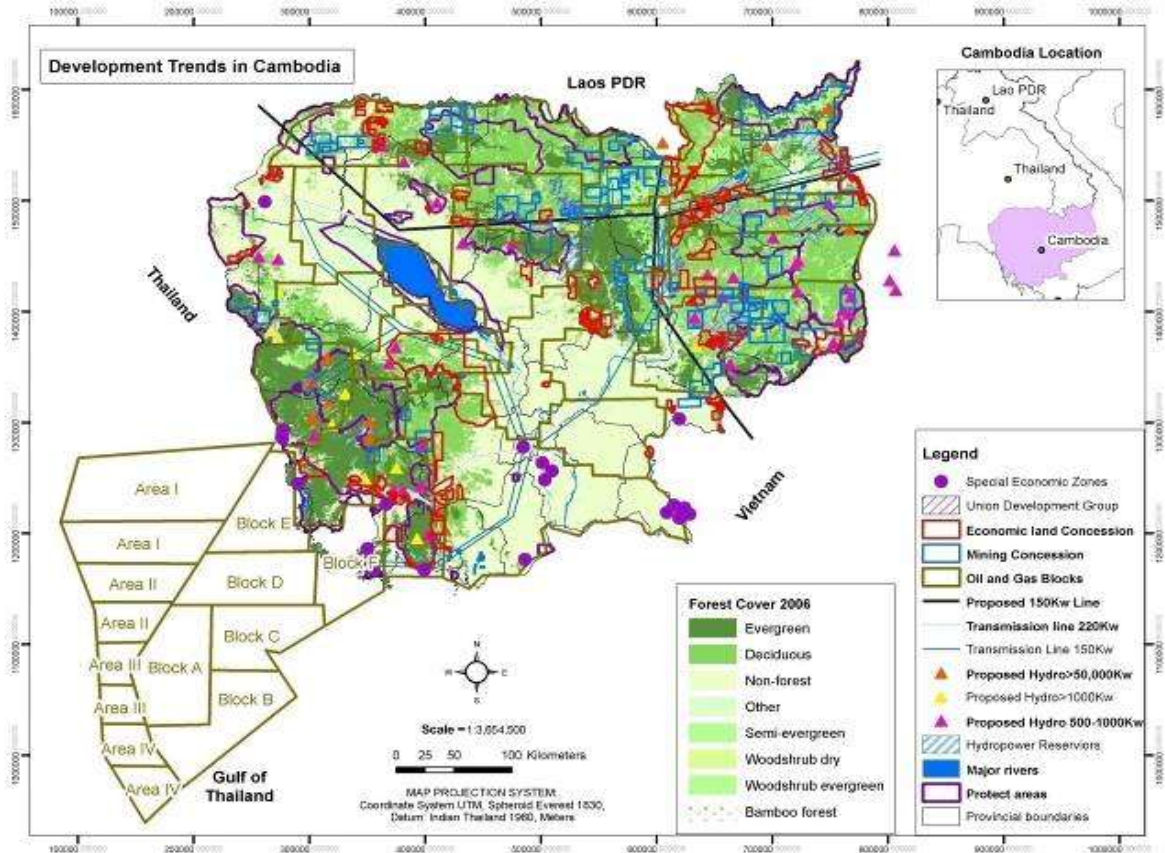
.. the lack of flexibility on the part of donors, their failure to encourage debate or permit experimentation over different forms of development, and their general complicity in the suppression of civil society, have facilitated the ascendance of the most secretive, most violent, and most corrupt section of Cambodia’s post-war elite, which now enjoys greater freedom from internal scrutiny that, arguably, it did in the early 1990’s. (Hughes 2009 p165)



Map 2: New economic development zones fitting in with the Greater Mekong Subregion development plans (from <http://www.adb.org/gms/>)



Map 3: Greater Mekong Subregion transportation plan (<http://www.adb.org/gms/>)



Map 4: Developments affecting natural resources in Cambodia. Mapped from publicly available information and located at www.sithi.org. Many of the extractive industries and plantation concessions are over indigenous peoples' territories.

Duncan McCargo (2010), an academic expert in Southeast Asia studies and author of the Freedom House 2010 chapter on Cambodia, also notes how donors have continued funding Cambodia despite obvious abuse of rights:

Every year, donors issue ritual protestations concerning the government's appalling record on tackling corruption and then proceed to provide even more aid than has been requested In return, donors eventually receive new laws, new policies, and promises of implementation. Meanwhile, the CPP is consolidating its authoritarianism, while average Cambodians remain stripped of a sense of citizenship and participation in the governing of their country.

These scholars argue that market-driven logic and neo-liberal development models support the rise of government that is largely unaccountable to the people of Cambodia. The abuse of rights and the alienation of indigenous peoples' lands are, of course, just a symptom of that. Under these conditions, programs to support empowerment of indigenous peoples might be viewed as either pointless or a guise for continuation of the same disempowering models of development.

Indigenous peoples' representation

Indigenous Peoples in government

Under these conditions, indigenous people's voice in policy making is problematic. Whilst there are no laws maintaining quotas for indigenous people's representatives in government, indigenous peoples in Cambodia are present at various levels. Village chiefs are appointed by the government but are often also selected through community process prior to being recognised by government. For indigenous communities where literacy is very low, village chiefs are not traditional leaders – because of a requirement to be literate to be village chief. Generally, however, in indigenous villages, village chiefs are indigenous peoples.

The next level of government, the commune councils, has been elected in formal voting procedures since 2002. Commune elections, like national elections, however, are party based and there are many allegations of party influence over the voting process, including intimidation of party candidates from non-ruling parties, influence on the voter rolls and the general perception that not voting the ruling party back into power would result in violence or lack of support and resources after the election (Ann et al 2008).

With communes attached to the party, they often sway between the pull of the party and the pull of their commune residents. The outside influence is often stronger, as witnessed by the numerous large-scale land deals signed contrary to law and community benefit (NGO Forum on Cambodia 2006).

There is very much lower indigenous representation in district and provincial government, which are elected by commune councillors. As with commune councils, there are some representatives supportive of district and provincial residents, but again, they operate in a tight space, being pulled between their constituents and powerful patrons.

Being sparsely populated, the two northeastern provinces of Ratanakiri and Mondolkiri both have only one elected member to the national assembly. Both are indigenous people from the ruling party. That is the extent of indigenous people's representation in the direct representation in the national assembly of 123 seats.

Indigenous Peoples representation in civil society

As Baird (2011) notes, much of the recognition of indigenous peoples has come largely from progressive elements within the international community. In the late 1990s and early 2000s international financial and political pressure was effective and the Cambodian Government created specific rights for indigenous peoples, primarily through the 2001 Land Law.

That situation, however, has changed as the Cambodian government has significantly reduced its western donor dependence. "Stability" and market-led development have brought in private-sector investment. This has been complemented by a large rise in funding from non-western donors, such as China and Vietnam, leaving the rights of indigenous peoples stated in law but tenuous in practice. A great burden lies on indigenous civil society to contest dispossession of their territories and advocate for the implementation of laws.



Elders are the traditional representatives of civil society but their role has been undermined by many outside forces and influences.

Indigenous civil society in Cambodia is, however, weak. Often, the defence of indigenous peoples' rights falls on the shoulders of development agencies - which can further weaken indigenous communities because advocacy is being conducted on their behalf. Despite the abundance of development agencies in Cambodia, grassroots civil society remains in a very nascent form. There are still no firmly developed civil society representation structures at national or provincial levels. Cambodian indigenous peoples face the task of having to build representational structures while also having to defend what is left of their resources.

Formal government recognition of *village-level* community representation has recently commenced, primarily for land titling. The 2001 Land Law gave indigenous communities the right to own land collectively, but only if the communities have been registered as legal entities by the government. This registration work has, however, been very slow, with the development of quite complex community statutes. From 2001 to September 2010 only 8 villages in Ratanakiri province and 6 villages in Mondolkiri province have become registered as legal entities by the Ministry of Interior. Also, in order to speed the process, and to assist indigenous communities get more formalised protection of their land in the interim period prior to legal entity registration, the Ministry of Rural Development has been supported to provide *recognition of indigenous identity*. This involves recognition of functional indigenous social structures without the need for formal statutes.



The village meeting hall of La Ok village, Ratanakiri Province. The sign declares the legal entity recognition gained by the community.

For above-village association, perhaps the most developed is the Highlanders Association in Ratanakiri. There is also an NGO registered to provide support to the development of this association. This NGO is confusingly known as Highlanders Association, but is perhaps better referred to as "Highlanders Association Working Group". This group has the role of supporting and resourcing the community association and has been doing so, starting by supporting consultations with communities related to issues and priorities. When it began its work in 2001, it aimed to support development an overall policy body for indigenous peoples in Ratanakiri. However, over time the program has refocused and became more service-delivery orientated, unfortunately shedding much of its association-building role (see box on page 54).

Indigenous Peoples Working Groups

Deepening and broadening indigenous civil society will take a long time. In the meantime, indigenous communities are under extreme pressure (some characterise it as an attack) from development that undermines their rights. Immediate higher-level representation has, therefore, been performed by indigenous working groups. These groups are perhaps best described as semi-representative, fulfilling the role of collective community voice, while (hopefully) working to support the development of deeper, community-owned indigenous civil society structures.

Many of these groups are operational at commune, district and provincial level. Examples are the Ratanakiri Natural Resource Management Network (RNRMN) and Indigenous Youth Development Project (IYDP) located in Ratanakiri province. The Three 'S' Rivers Network (3 SPN) has since developed to support education, advocacy and experience sharing for people located on the Sesan, Srepok and Sekong rivers, which are being inundated by hydro-electricity projects (see earlier sections of this report). There is also the Prey Lang network of predominantly Kuy people seeking to halt the incursion into the largest lowland evergreen forest left in South-East Asia around the junction of Stung Treng, Kratie, Preah Vihear and Kompong Thom provinces.

At the national level, Indigenous Rights Active Members (IRAM) and Indigenous Peoples Working Group (IPWG) represent a bringing together of indigenous leaders from 15 provinces. Over the past year, IRAM/IPWG has evolved into a working group that supports empowerment of and networking among indigenous communities. IRAM/IPWG has organized meetings within different regions in Cambodia, and at national level, with participants elected from indigenous communities in an effort to work towards a community-based, representative national indigenous peoples' network. They also seek to ensure that indigenous communities understand their rights and how to claim them, with a focus on land and resource management. Through IRAM, Cambodian indigenous peoples have been involved in UN treaty reporting and advocacy, and it has helped to disseminate the results of UN reviews to communities. These activities have been used also as tools of community empowerment, organizing, and networking.



Indigenous Rights Active Members and other groups have helped communities in their struggle to retain their lands.

Working in collaboration with IRAM has been the Cambodian Indigenous Youth Association (CIYA). While its name suggests it is an association, it is currently more a club which is, hopefully, working toward supporting local level indigenous youth associations (working in collaboration with other sectors/groups within the same community) that can then join at higher levels.

Non-Government Organisations

NGOs in Cambodia are often assumed to represent civil society. The vast majority, however, are non-representational in nature. They are perhaps better placed to take what Fowler (2007), describes as the "fourth position", a support and service sector to work with and promote peoples organisations (a service society, as opposed to a civil society). In fact, NGOs tend to dominate the development agenda, as opposed to operating under the direction of peoples' organisations or civil society. A growing number of analysts have said this hinders rather than promotes grassroots civil society development.

Indigenous people lead few of the NGOs. Reasons for this relate to the level of educational opportunity available to indigenous peoples and the administrative and reporting demands of the development aid system. There are a number of non-indigenous peoples NGOs, however, set up to support the development of inter-community networking related to natural resources, health and education. In order to do that in a more constructive manner, and in local languages, many organisations have employed indigenous people. A number of local programs particularly in Ratanakiri now have 80 percent indigenous staff.

The Media and access to information for indigenous peoples



Access to information for indigenous peoples in Cambodia

Consideration of access to information for indigenous peoples is embedded within the broader Cambodian situation. No freedom of information law exists in Cambodia. PACT,²⁵ a key NGO working on Freedom of Information issues, describe the situation as:

In Cambodia, public information is customarily accessed through personal contacts rather than through clear mechanisms, which encourages corruption. Gaining access to even basic information such as draft laws, regulations, national budgets, and policy papers is exceptionally difficult. The high level of secrecy surrounding the reasoning and justification for governmental decision-making is an obstacle to information sharing within government as well as between the government and other sectors.

and:

The current Cambodian Press Law provides rights for the press to access certain information but does not give a similar right to the general public.

This means that much information is theoretically available, but only through the media. Here, Freedom House's 2010 report notes:

While some journalists have sought to use this provision (in the 1995 Press Law) to obtain official documents, most are reluctant to do so because the process may involve requests for bribes in exchange for information, is unlikely to elicit useful information, and could expose them to charges of defamation if they were to uncover and publicize official misconduct. (Mc Cargo 2010 p 17)

A 2009 briefing paper by the Cambodian League for the Promotion and Defence of Human Rights (LICADHO)²⁶ states "the media environment in Cambodia may be better than that in some countries in the region – and it is certainly an improvement on the dark days of the Khmer Rouge and post-Khmer Rouge eras – but should not be considered a free press" (p2).

The same LICADHO report lists eight Cambodian television stations and many radio stations, including 22 national radio stations, five international stations (including RFA and VOA) and 40 provincial radio services (mostly relay from Phnom Penh). Virtually no community radio stations exist in Cambodia, formally or informally.

Similarly, the 2009 LICADHO report lists 27 newspapers, three of which are foreign, and mentions that "there is also a healthy sub-genre of Chinese-language newspapers which focus mainly on business news" (LICADHO 2009 p13).

With regard to the legal framework for media, Neave (2009 p9) describes the 1995 Press Law as "flawed" but "nevertheless a reasonable piece of legislation". The law is said to concern only print publications but a "Law on Public Electronic Broadcasting Service Management" is being developed to cover cable and satellite broadcasting as well (Neave 2009 p 10). There are concerns that this law will also be used to extend restrictions on broadcast media to audiovisual online content (McCargo 2010).

The ownership of these media agencies is also an important issue. A 2008 report by LICADHO examining the ownership of media summarised the situation:

²⁵ http://www.pactworld.org/cs/stories_cambodia_app_story1 accessed December 2010.

²⁶ Licadho, 2009, Restriction on the Freedom of Expression of Cambodia's Media., LICADHO Briefing Paper, May 2009.

Almost all Cambodia's media is aligned to a political party, with the vast majority favoring the ruling Cambodian People's Party (CPP). The situation varies depending on the media - television is totally owned or controlled by the government or CPP, radio has a few opposition-aligned stations and some important independent voices, while most newspapers act as mouthpieces for one party or another, with the exception of the foreign-language press. (LICADHO 2008, p i)

There are no indigenous people owned and operated media outlets in Cambodia. In the northeast, provincial departments of information have small numbers of indigenous staff, but there are still no indigenous "journalists" in Cambodia in 2010. This leaves indigenous peoples reliant on information provided to them by local authorities, NGOs or through partisan media services. Consultation for this project also revealed that the majority of indigenous peoples also are very new to media and generally accept content with a low degree of critical analysis – partly because of the low diversity of media reaching them. These factors represent a disempowering situation for indigenous peoples.

Freedom of Expression.

Freedom of expression is also a growing concern in Cambodia, despite the fact that it is enshrined in law. Article 41 of the Constitution guarantees freedom of expression ("Khmer citizens shall have freedom of expression, press, publication and assembly") while Article 37 also provides "The right to strike and to non-violent demonstration" and Article 39 provides the right to "denounce, make complaints, or file claims against any breach of law by the state or social organs or by members of such organs committed during the course of their duties".

The actual situation with regard to freedom of expression is said to be restrictive. Reports such as "Losing Ground: Forced Evictions and Intimidation in Cambodia" (CHRAC 2009) and "Still Losing Ground: Forced Evictions and Intimidation in Cambodia" (CHRAC and HRTF 2010) have allowed community people from across the country to explain what happens when they express their desire for a resolution of their issues, particularly with regard to natural resources.

When communities sought to engage with their government in compliance with legal processes, what were the results? In short, the research shows that while there were some superficial attempts to address the issues expressed in the complaints, the vast majority of communities who lodged complaints in 2009 saw no improvements nor were they offered alternative solutions to alleviate their plight. Instead, many experienced increased threats, intimidation, land grabs and more land concessions.²⁷

One mechanism for intimidation noted is imprisonment of community activists. Violent suppression of protests, shootings and killings were also reported.²⁸

Specifically regarding indigenous peoples, a report from NGO Forum on Cambodia to the review of the multi-donor Poverty Reduction Growth Operation (PRGO) in 2008 noted that while land alienation continued, many people expressing dissatisfaction and complaints were subject to intimidation. The report outlines a number of examples of community people being jailed, threatened and intimidated. It also mentioned threats against lawyers and NGO staff supporting

²⁷ Cambodian Human Rights Action Committee and Housing Right Task Force, 2010, *Still Losing Ground: Evictions and intimidation in Cambodia*, CHRAC and HTFP 2010. <http://www.hrtfcambodia.org/images/slges.pdf>

²⁸ CHRAC 2009, *Losing Ground: Forced Eviction and Intimidation in Cambodia*, Cambodian Human Rights Action Committee, September 2009. Available at <http://www.chrac.org/eng/CHRAC%20Statement%20in%202009/Losing%20Ground%20FINAL.compressed.pdf>

community people in their right to freedom of expression and protest against what they see as illegal land acquisitions.

Journalists reporting sensitive issues in Cambodia also face similar threats. Indeed, a report by a collective of NGOs, released in September 2010, stated:

...we have seen the continued erosion of the right to freedom of expression with the judiciary being used as an organ of repression in silencing dissent and opinion critical of the RGC (Royal Government of Cambodia). This crackdown has targeted the pillars of democracy: parliamentarians, the media, lawyers, human rights activists and the people. (Cambodian Center for Human Rights et al 2010)

For the media, this comes in the form of a violent actions against critical journalists and a number of arrests after defamation cases - despite Article 20 of the Press Law providing that “[n]o person shall be arrested or subject to criminal charges as a result of expression of opinion” (CCHR et al 2010). The 2008 LICADHO report on media in Cambodia concluded:

... the widespread practice of self-censorship - which is perhaps the single biggest threat to media freedom in Cambodia - keeps many stories out of the public sphere. Journalists know the stories which might land them in trouble, and tackle them with extreme care or not at all.

Fear is a fact of life for many of Cambodia’s journalists. In a 2007 survey of 150 journalists conducted for this report, 65% of them said they were afraid of being physically attacked, and 62% feared legal action against them. More tellingly, 54% said they had been threatened with physical harm or legal action.

The Press Law’s explicit proviso that “no person shall be arrested or subject to criminal charges as result of expression of opinion” has been violated repeatedly.

There are, however, a number of positive elements within the media and information arena. Non-contentious issues are free to be written about or broadcast. A number of independent radio services also exist. The 2009 LICADHO report comments:

Independent radio services, including international broadcasters such as Radio Free Asia, Radio France International and Voice of America, provide some balance to the heavily CPP biased electronic media and do report more freely on politics, illegal logging, land grabbing and corruption. The reportedly high listenership of these news bulletins shows there is a thirst by many Cambodians for independent and non-government news sources.

In addition to these and the print and electronic media, the word-of-mouth is still very important for information transfer to and from communities. NGOs that operate in Cambodia conduct extensive meetings, trainings and forums. Recently, however, there has been a rise in control over such NGO operations especially when they are related to issues of human rights (CCHR et al 2010).

A draft NGO and association law, released in December 2010 and slightly revised in March 2011, also seemingly makes illegal the operations of community networks and associations that choose to remain unregistered. This could represent a major restriction on the role of community focal people in the distribution of information to communities if they are not working in partnership with a registered NGO.

The Digital Communications Environment for indigenous peoples



Regulatory environment

At present there is no regulatory regime that applies to the Internet, especially after the scrapping of government plans to channel all internet traffic through a single state-owned hub (CCHR et al, 2010). Despite this, CCHR et al (2010) note:

So far we have seen implementation of 'regulation' at the whim of government ministries, manifesting itself in the blocking of sites that are viewed as immoral There is a fear that this form of control will be implemented in actual regulation to censor the internet more generally, with the government turning to models of internet control that prevail in Vietnam and China, to block access to political content (p21).

Internet communication remains minimal in Cambodia, where access and literacy levels are low. LICADHO (2009) summarised that:

There are only an estimated 44,000 internet users in Cambodia or just 0.3% of the population. As high costs, poor infrastructure and limited computer literacy keep the internet from reaching the broad public, such independent media is only able to reach a fraction of the population.*

*(footnote: * This statistic is widely cited, and sourced to the UN's International Telecommunication Union, but it's unclear how it was calculated.)*

This is particularly so for the vast majority of rural areas without electricity, and is compounded by low levels of literacy and high levels of poverty. In the early 2000s a USAID program funded establishment of Community Information Centres (CICs) in all provinces, including those with indigenous peoples. Despite a US\$1.2 million investment, the program only reached the predominantly non-indigenous residents of the provincial centres. Following a three-year funded program to provide free access, charges have been put in place and use of the centres has waned.

Despite this, mobile phone internet connection could offer flexibility for indigenous media distribution. Miyata (2006) noted that "Cambodia is the first country in the world where mobile telephone subscribers surpassed fixed ones. In 2004, 96 percent of telephone numbers were for mobile subscribers." As noted in consultations with indigenous communities, possibly 80 percent of indigenous people have access to mobile phones and mobile phone service is rapidly evolving into complete coverage.

This offers opportunity for 2G or 3G mobile internet connections. This, of course, would require that computer or hand-held devices are present at least in each commune (small computers with low power use). For media distribution, a number of people could be trained to download media, and then copy it to devices that community people could use.

It is noted that many indigenous and non-indigenous people use mobile phones as listening devices for MP3-format files and radio (though the reception is weaker than in dedicated radio units). A small number of people are also using phones as hand-held video players.

Indigenous peoples could use Internet to provide information about their culture and issues to the growing number of middle class people predominantly in urban areas or to international audiences while avoiding some of the restrictions on media such as radio and television.

CCHR et al (2010), however, note that the Ministry of Information is said to want to extend the Press Law to apply to publishing and broadcasting over the Internet and this may represent a future restriction on this means of distribution.

Portrayal of indigenous peoples in mainstream media


In absolute terms there is relatively low coverage of indigenous issues in the media. In relative terms, however, while indigenous peoples represent only 1.5 percent of the population, news items relating to indigenous peoples issues are often more than 1.5 percent of coverage on independent radio stations such as Radio Free Asia. This perhaps reflects the disproportionately high prevalence of land rights abuses in indigenous people's areas (which is now changing, as land concessions spread over the country).

Outside of independent radio services, however, the portrayal of indigenous peoples is somewhat paternalistic. As Baird (2011) states, "stereotypes are frequently reproduced by the Khmer in music videos and other cultural productions, even if, in reality, many are no longer particularly relevant as real differences."

A large number of non-indigenous peoples also still refer to all indigenous people as "Phnong", a term somewhat derogatory in nature, probably derived from the majority ethnicity in Mondolkiri, the "Bunong", and regard indigenous peoples as primitive and in need of becoming non-indigenous (Baird 2011).

Indigenous peoples have been trying to access mainstream media to rectify the skewed coverage. A number of examples of this illustrate the difficulties and also the opportunities.

Neave (2009) and LICADHO (2008, 2009) report that these independent radio stations play an important role in Cambodia's media. They have sizeable and loyal audiences and provide an editorial perspective not controlled by the Cambodian government (though serious threats have been made against RFA reporters). Such independent radio stations complement the English and French language newspapers (many of which also have Khmer translations), which also carry a significant amount of information on indigenous rights issues, but have very low penetration in the Cambodia population.

	
<u>Community Voice on Radio Free Asia.</u>	
<p>Radio Free Asia (RFA) broadcasts a Khmer language service across Asia two times a day: 7:30 – 8:30am and 6:30 – 7:30pm. It has reporters based in provincial areas, including Ratanakiri, and covers land and rights issues. RFA broadcasts reach a large number of indigenous communities and include interviews with indigenous peoples who speak Khmer.</p> <p>RFA is often described as a private radio station established by the United States Congress and funded by the United States government. It describes its mandate as being to broadcast timely, accurate news happening within its broadcast region that is "otherwise not reported". It operates in six countries in Asia, in nine languages, and is a private, non-profit organization. It was incorporated in March 1996 and began broadcasting in September 1996.</p>	

Even within these media agencies there is, however, room for improvement in coverage on indigenous issues. Many reporters have shown a low understanding of the legal issues related to indigenous peoples' lands. The focus has often been on the conflicts between residents and powerful people and concessionaires, but the illegality of the land acquisitions and concessions is sometimes unreported. In many cases, rights groups report, the powerful people have little or no legal claim to the lands they take – and it is government that has assisted or allowed them to do so. The reporting of the events also often misses the issues of overall systematic corruption and the overall picture of environmental destruction (a few feature-length international reports have taken this line).



Radio transmission is generally in Khmer language but radio units are cheap to run and common in villages.

There have also been activities targeted to raise indigenous people's issues among the general Cambodian population. One example is radio forums on indigenous issues.

Radio Programs, including talk-back, on indigenous issues

The Indigenous Community Support Organisations (ICSO), in collaboration with community media advisory groups in Ratanakiri, has initiated radio programs on indigenous issues. A weekly one-hour radio program (11am-12 noon on Thursdays) commenced in August 2010. Voice of Democracy airs the programs and relays them to 13 provinces (not reaching Ratanakiri or Mondolkiri).

The programs have focussed on culture and land titling and have had speakers from indigenous communities (including Khmer speaking elders) and government officials.

The issue of the programs not being aired in Ratanakiri and Mondolkiri also needs to be addressed, as this is where a majority of indigenous people live.



An indigenous community representative speaks during a radio program on Sarika Radio Station FM106.5MHz. These programs aim to increase non-indigenous people's awareness of indigenous peoples in Cambodia.

A similar model of raising community issues is also in the form of recorded community or open forums. The Cambodian Centre for Human Rights has been active in using this approach, for indigenous and non-indigenous communities.

As explained below, the formula is that a panel of speakers is invited to present brief opinions on a topic then the audience is free to ask questions and provide comment. It has been observed that land and forest issues have been of high priority to community people throughout the country.

Open forums supported by Cambodian Centre for Human Rights (CCHR)

The Cambodian Centre for Human Rights (CCHR) has a program that organises open forums in areas throughout Cambodia. The format is to find a large venue and invite community, government and NGO representatives to take part in open discussions. A panel is invited to speak and take questions and comments from the audience. While the program is not specifically for indigenous peoples, a number of open forums have been held in their areas.

The discussions at the forums are recorded then broadcast on 6 radio stations around the country without editing by those stations. The cost averages US\$20/hour.

Topics discussed included hot and pressing cases related to land. This has resulted in the shutting down of one of the radio stations. But generally the 6 radio stations are willing to air the material in full (possibly linked with the economic incentives to do so).

It should be noted that the radio coverage area does not include the main indigenous people's areas of Ratanakiri and Mondolkiri, and even if it did, the program would not overcome language barriers as 80 percent of community people in remote and semi-remote villages do not speak Khmer.

Indigenous peoples working on community media have also been seeing the potential to use national television to raise awareness of their issues. This has started with production of small "spots" on indigenous issues broadcast on mainstream stations.

Initially the spots were made under the direction of a community advisory group based in Ratanakiri but in the future the nation indigenous peoples network will take over this role.



A community person speaks at an Open Forum in June 2010

Indigenous Issues TV "Spots"

Indigenous Community Support Organisations (ICSO) has been working with community groups in Ratanakiri to advise on community media (see "Forest Mountain Voices and Indigenous Community Voices" above). In 2010, it expanded its approach from producing community videos for and by community people to raising indigenous issues in mainstream Khmer media. Community media advisory groups have decided the topics they would like covered.

The first of these 2-minutes spots had the message that destroying forest destroyed indigenous people's culture. It was aired twice a week on Bayon TV and TTK from September through to November 2010. The audio from the spots was also broadcast on Bayon and WMC radio twice weekly. A production company was hired to produce the spot and both indigenous and non-indigenous people played roles.

The second 2-minutes spot also raised Article 28 of the Cambodian Land Law which says, "No authority outside the community may acquire any rights to immovable properties belonging to an indigenous community". The goal was to produce a TV-standard spot that could be easily accepted by a TV station, then develop the skills of indigenous volunteers to make more spots and programs who would then, under the direction of a community media advisory group, produce more content for outside TV audiences.

Indigenous language services

There is only one small media service in Cambodia specifically for indigenous peoples, using their languages: a 40-minute slot on the government radio station in Ratanakiri province.

Case Study: Local Language program on Ratanakiri Provincial Radio.

A UNESCO-supported project supported the upgrade of the national radio in Ban Lung, Ratanakiri. This project was initiated in 2007 with a donation of equipment. During 2009, UNESCO organized and provided two training sessions on “How to do Community Radio” to three additional ethnic groups (Tampuen, Jarai and Brao). Initially, 40 people started training and those most talented continued to be local language radio reporters. They produced reports in Brao, Kreung, Tampuen and Jarai languages. The reports were mainly about education and health. The station also carried translations of national news.

After the project ended funding became an issue and the focus has shifted to translating national news into local languages. Currently, 40 minutes of local language reports (10 minutes in each language) is provided twice daily at 9am and 5pm. The time, particularly the morning slot, is less than ideal, indigenous communities report. It would be better to broadcast at 6am to 8am, they say, because this is the time people are together in their houses before leaving to their farms.

Editorial decisions are made by the IP language team, but under an agreement with the Provincial Department of Information. Community people report that issues related to rights, particularly land rights, are absent.

Provincial radio reaches most areas in the province. In January or February 2011 the station’s transmitter is to be upgraded by the Ministry of Information from 1 kW to 2 kW, extending coverage to all areas of the province as well as some areas of neighbouring provinces.²⁹

The program lacks a formal system for community feedback. During consultations the communities said that while they valued the local language time slot, they found the service to contain mainly non-indigenous news, politically biased news and had no information on land or resource rights.

Community groups said they would like to have independent indigenous radio production teams to produce content for the provincial station to broadcast. The Department of Information has said they are happy to do this but the cost would be US\$160/hour or US\$80/month for 2-4 minute daily timeslots.



²⁹ Interview with Director Department of Information, December 2010.

Equal Access, and International NGO dedicated to media for social change, has illustrated the potential for radio services. The case study below highlights how mainstream radio can be used for community voice and community production.

Equal Access Cambodia.

Equal Access has been operating in Africa, the Middle East and Asia, including Cambodia. Its mission is to support positive social change for underserved people by providing information and education through innovative media, appropriate technology and direct community engagement. While it works in Cambodia with poor, non-indigenous communities, it has yet to implement programs explicitly directed at supporting indigenous peoples. A brief discussion of its program is included here because it may be a model useful to indigenous peoples and communication for empowerment.

Equal Access focus mainly on radio but there are some programs on TV and content for the print media. One key feature is audience engagement, through listening groups, community feedback and a program of community reporters. Previously, Equal Access broadcast its program services through satellite radio but this ended in 2008 when satellite operations at a partner company closed. Now, content is produced and aired through a network of 24 provincial, mainly FM, radio stations. Community call-in is also used to increase local content and opinions.

A program of community radio reporters has also been operating for 2 years and has created in a pool of young reporters who record local stories and edit them into useable products.

Equal Access also operates a system of non-broadcast materials, such as distribution of cassettes or CDs of programs produced for radio, and has expressed interest in working with indigenous peoples' groups to provide services in local languages.

Community Media

Community media is generally regarded to have community ownership, local content, as well as language and cultural relevance. Community media is seen as an alternative to market-driven commercial and mainstream media outlets and offers either a wide and open editorial policy or a more fine-tuned approach that still allows community participation.



Community media fits well with a tradition of community arts. In some cases the ability to record traditional arts has produced a revival of community pride.

Community media outlets not only reflect their communities but also become integral to the communities they serve. Often accountability goes beyond the provision of opportunities to get involved in the operation and management of the service and takes the form of community ownership within a legally constituted non-profit structure. When community media accountability works effectively, it ensures that the organisation concerned reflects the needs and aspirations of its community.

As discussed above, the Cambodian government does not promote a diverse mix of public, private and community media. There is virtually no community broadcast media in Cambodia (either indigenous or non-indigenous). LICADHO (2008) observed that “(o)pposition parties and

anyone considered unlikely to be sympathetic toward the government (and specifically the CPP) have routinely been denied radio licenses over the years”(p13). A number of people interviewed also stated that radio transmitters were very difficult to get into Cambodia and it would be unlikely that one would be allowed in legally unless aligned to government interests.

Another approach is non-broadcast media. Following a number of community media production programs supported by NGOs, media production has been primarily in the form of video made by indigenous volunteers operating under the direction of small community groups. One recent suggestion has been to form an indigenous peoples NGO and for that legal entity to register an “audio newspaper” or a “video newsletter” to distribute rather than broadcast. Such options have already begun operating informally as part of development programs and have been generating much interest in and by indigenous communities.

It should be reiterated, however, that indigenous civil society remains extremely weak, and consequently there are very few inter-community structures that could manage community media production, especially to protect the right to broadcast material related to the rights of indigenous peoples. Community media, however, may offer an opportunity to promote the development of civil society structures, first for the management of community media, and later for other purposes. In this case, it is important that indigenous peoples obtain enough support to be able to learn media production and management skills.

Probably the most illustrative example of indigenous community media in Cambodia is a program previously called Forest Mountain Voices and now Promoting Indigenous Voices. It was originally started by an international-NGO in Ratanakiri where a group of indigenous people supervised a small group of trained indigenous video makers. It started in 2004, and, in late July 2005 the first workshop with community representatives was held. This workshop saw discussion of priorities for indigenous media production and the formation of a Community Advisory Group to guide production.



A number of Indigenous people in Ratanakiri have developed the ability to film and edit video and have been directed by community representatives.

In November 2005 the advisory group started developing plans for the unit and came up with the name “Forest Mountain Voices” (FMV). The FMV vision was to “produce videos to keep indigenous culture and identity, and reinforce the community’s right to manage their own natural resources”. FMV made media about community issues, such as culture, identity, health, gender, land and solidarity in Ratanakiri for audiences locally and internationally.

Films were distributed to communities in Ratanakiri via CDs through the FMV Advisory Group. In

early 2006 an enlarged group enabled FMV to produce films in all of the major indigenous languages of Ratanakiri (and one Mondolkiri language). FMV films have also been screened before the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous People, premiered in Australia at The Dreaming Indigenous Arts Festival, and been accepted for screening at the Oxford Human Rights film festival.

In mid 2006, the program became part of Indigenous Community Support Organisation (ICSO) and changed its focus to community media training and the NGO staff became trainers rather than producers.

In 2010 an external evaluation found:

Production of a video ... gives a strong feeling of pride and commitment to the people of that community, and increasing the solidarity and strength of the community.

...a video newsletter would serve to keep indigenous communities informed about recent events, including excerpts from speeches by government officials, interviews with community leaders, and the efforts of communities to protect their livelihood resources and cultures.³⁰

Despite the power of video, the program also showed that limited skills and facilities meant that video production service could only be based at the district or provincial level. Thus projects were seen to be “away” from the local level and still tending to be seen as “NGO projects”. Analysis in November 2010, however, suggested that audio recording could offer an alternative, requiring less expense and less production time thus providing the opportunity to be more locally based.

The program still proposes that video production be based at the district and provincial level. Community audio programs could support local level groups to link together for higher level community management structures.

It is important to note that there are also the beginnings of linking of various nascent community media efforts. These efforts are directed at community media supporting broader networking of the many marginalised groups within Cambodia (some commentators note that the majority of Cambodian people are marginalised).

National Community Media Fair.


The first national community media fair was held in 2008. It allowed communities from around the country to share media they had made – including song, dance, posters, photos, drawings, role plays and videos on local issues. Presentations were filed and video provided to the participants at the end of the event. A large number indigenous people took part in this event.

A national community media advisory group including indigenous peoples formed to organise and facilitate a 2009 event that was held in Kratie province, again with participants from around the country. The 2010 community media fair was held in Kompong Thom province with 300 participants from all 24 provinces. Videos of the event were distributed throughout the country.



Indigenous peoples from Mondolkiri perform at the 2010 National community fair i- an opportunity for communities from around the country to share their song, dance, poems, photos, video and audio work.

³⁰ Yeup and Hubble 2010. Evaluation of ICSO O Yadou and Borkeo District programs, March 2010



**Indigenous
Peoples
participation,
access to media
and
information**

The consultation Process

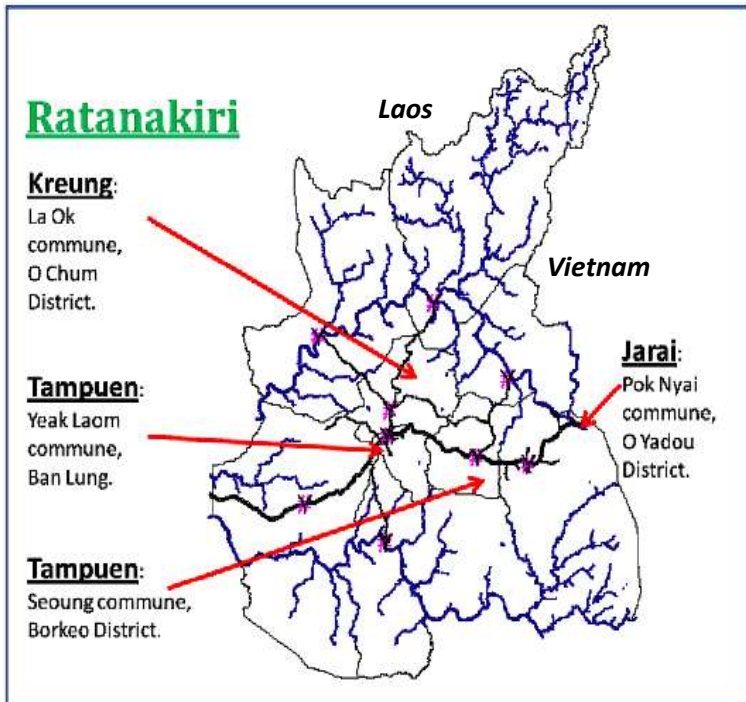
To assess the situation at the community level, consultations, led by teams of indigenous people, were undertaken in Ratanakiri, Kratie, Kompong Thom, Battambang, Kompong Speu, Stung Treng and Mondulkin provinces. These locations were chosen by a working group of indigenous peoples in order to reflect the diversity of indigenous peoples in Cambodia.



Ratanakiri province in the northeast was chosen for intensive consultations for a number of reasons, including having a number of community media initiatives there over the past 10 years. There is a small indigenous language service on the provincial government radio, and because it is an area with low levels of Khmer-language use.

A selection of areas across the three main Ratanakiri language groups was chosen to reflect different situations with regard to development impacts. There were consultations in all Jarai villages of Pok Nyai commune close to the Vietnamese border and along a proposed regional development zone transport route.

A Tampuen people's commune, Soeung, in Borkeo district illustrated the impact of a prolonged period of the agro-investment development model used in Ratanakiri. The community was barely holding onto its remaining land.



This was also the same situation for the Tampeun people of Yeak Laom commune, adjacent to the Ratanakiri provincial centre of Ban Lung. They have lost tenure over the vast majority their lands. Media services were available because of the close proximity to the provincial centre, but most were not suited to their needs. In Yeak Laom, however, there were indications of a renewed push by the community to hold onto what is left, with media seen as key in that effort.

La Ok commune, a commune of Kreung villages, was selected because of its relatively strong resistance to incursion and cultural disruption. Relatively little land tenure loss had occurred,

cultural identity was still strong, the community was not along a major transport route and there was a strong commitment to retaining rights, territories and culture.

Mondolkiri, along with Ratanakiri province is a province with majority indigenous peoples. Bousra commune was selected for consultations for a number of logistical reasons but because it has been experiencing rapid change due to rubber concessions but has had little outside support. All Bunong ethnicity villages in the commune were consulted.

O'long village in Siem Bouk district of **Stung Treng** was chosen by the national working group of indigenous peoples because it represented a quite isolated and forest dependent Kuy community in the very north of the country.

Veal Veng Village, in **Kompong Thom** Province was selected because it represented Kuy culture located toward the middle of Cambodia. It is relatively remote but also has a high proportion of people being able to speak Khmer. As such it illustrates how, even though Khmer language in media can be understood, existing information and media systems still do not adequately meet indigenous people's needs.

This was also the case for the Por community in **Battambang**. Phnom Ray village is close to the Thai border, and is the only indigenous village in Battambang (there are other Por people in Pursat province). Cambodian media is barely present in the area and Thai media though available is not accessible to a large proportion of the village residents.

Kordontey village in **Kompong Speu** province was chosen because the Suy people in Kompong Speu are about 1,200 people and the last remaining Suy people in the world. In 2010 a civil society report to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination raised the question of "The End of the Suy?" in relation to a large Economic Land Concession over their lands.

Yeav village in **Kratie** was chosen because of its relative closeness to provincial and district centres (but not well serviced) and because it was primarily a non-indigenous community, with an indigenous past, and some people who identified as Kuy people, even though they could not speak the language.

Overview of media situation in Cambodian indigenous villages.

Media services and devices:

Radio: Almost every household in the communities consulted has a radio. This reflects the national situation where radio is considered the primary means of access to information (Neave 2009). One reason is that radios are relatively inexpensive and run on batteries. Nearly all communities consulted lacked access to electricity, making generators necessary to power televisions. Some communities, such as Yeav in Kratie, have also started using "speakers", which are battery powered radio units with the capacity to play audio files from memory devices such as memory cards or USB flash drives.



Radio is cheap and easy. Batteries are readily available. Most content, however is not in indigenous languages or corresponding to community expressed needs.

Television: Television services are largely absent from the indigenous communities. Of the villages consulted, those in Yeak Loam commune, just 4 kilometres from the provincial centre, have the greatest access to television service. Still, even there, many people choose not to access the service or cannot because they cannot afford television sets or the cost of the generators necessary to power them.



Television is not widely available in indigenous communities. Lack of electricity is one reason. There is no indigenous language content and many respondents said other content is not worth watching.

Most indigenous people said TV was boring. Most of the content did not fit their daily lives. Many of people in the Indigenous communities did not understand them because many people do not speak Khmer language.

In areas more than 10 kilometres from provincial centres, there is low or no television service. It is interesting to note, however, that a number of older indigenous people said they were actually happy with no television - the services were considered corrosive of indigenous culture or controlled by powerful interests promoting their worldview.

Phones: Mobile phones have become a mode of supporting personal communication to and within communities. Phones are widespread in indigenous communities through a number of services, but there remain a few communities with no or marginal services. One observation has been that, while indigenous peoples get to use the services, the same services are perhaps actually established primarily to support economic development and businesses that are heavily involved in the abuse of indigenous peoples' rights, particularly in relation to land rights.

Phones are also often used as sound players or radio units. As sound players they join cassette players and CD players as modes to support mainly recreational listening. In this regard there is limited local language and indigenous identity material, the vast majority of the music being Khmer love songs, an issue that a number of elders are concerned about. They felt it was supporting a divide in culture between generations within communities.



Up to 90% of people have mobile phones. Youth have many, using them for music players and general communication. Elders and women generally have less phones or access.

Audio Devices: Audio devices are increasing in variety. CD players have added to cassette players. Both are now relatively common. Younger people are also using phones as audio devices. Khmer music is the main content. In some communities in Ratanakiri, they have access to a small number of audio recordings in indigenous languages (songs) and these are well used. Radios remain a common device for listening to music.

Print Media: Print media is minimal. A key factor is the very low level of written literacy. In Ratanakiri the number of indigenous people who can read and write Khmer is even more limited than the number who can speak it – often less than 10 percent. Other areas also have a low literacy level. As a result, written media is only accessible to very few people in communities. Even then, literate people say that much media is in a level of Khmer too high for easy reading. A small number of people read newspapers when visiting major towns while very few newspapers reach the villages. Magazines do, however, reach villages. Those that do are most often fashion or pop culture magazines.



Printed materials are barely present in indigenous communities, due to low literacy. Some posters are available. These generally relate to health, elections and some agricultural techniques. Some land rights posters have been seen. Many say they see the pictures but cannot read the messages. Other information related development issues is received by local authorities but sometimes not shared.

Word-of-mouth: Word-of-mouth communication, in local languages, remains a major form of communication. People talk to each other and there are systems of meetings, often associated with traditional ceremonies, within the villages. If social structures are still intact, information from outside may enter a community and be shared through traditional word-of-mouth communication. Sometimes, however, this has not happened, because local authorities or community focal people receiving information from outside do not share it adequately within the community. Issues of representation are raised by this phenomenon, and there is scope for examining how focal people could be more accountable to their communities rather than to NGO or development programs.

Language issues

The language barrier is especially acute in Ratanakiri, where the majority of media is in Khmer language, while up to 80 percent of the people do not speak Khmer. This particularly disadvantages women and elders - who have a lower level of spoken Khmer. Some people said that this endangers community solidarity by disrupting the traditional power balance and culture of communities. It is worth noting again that community solidarity and cohesion is one of the primary factors protecting resources in an environment of weak rule of law.

In relatively recent times, to assist in language issues, NGOs have employed more indigenous staff to provide information directly to community meetings using indigenous languages. Still, it was noted that meetings often exclude youth - who are often generally not invited. Women, too, have heavy household and child-rearing duties and are often unable to attend many of the meetings affecting the community.



It is women and elders who are most disadvantaged by media not using indigenous languages.

Mobile phones have greatly expanded the scope for word-of-mouth communication using indigenous languages. An issue with this is that many people cannot afford to use the phone often. For people who act as channels for information coming from NGOs it is often necessary for the NGO to provide phone credit or cover the cost of the calls.

Media Content

The services available on radio are more diverse than those on television. Indigenous peoples reported that radio, like television, was strongly aligned to party and government priorities. Many more-independent radio stations do not cover remote indigenous people's areas. As a result, indigenous communities receive a below-average level of independent radio.



All communities reported that they have little opportunity to raise their concerns through the media. This is particularly so for those who do not speak Khmer.

All communities consulted reported they have little opportunity to speak through media. There are very few opportunities to influence content. Media is seen as something deposited – “theirs” rather than “ours”.

All communities consulted were facing severe land and natural resource alienation. Most were subject to land concessions, possibly issued contrary to Cambodian law and international standards. All communities were facing issues of forest degradation and illegal logging. Such issues are missing from much of the local media. Radio transmitted from outside of the country was seen as one of the few independent sources of information.

While health and education services were noted to be poor in quality, people did say that they had sometimes received “adequate” health information through media and NGO meetings. Information about issues such as domestic violence had been received. Communities report hearing of instances of unsafe migration of young men and women (to become labourers or domestic servants in Malaysia) but lack reliable information about this issue.

Indigenous communities have an overwhelming feeling that they are alone. This comes from a great lack of communication and media for sharing between communities. Almost all of the media is delivered in a top-down manner, with little community input, decision making and involvement. This has helped produced a low level of media analysis by communities. Without a diversity of media and information, people are left believing what is provided without much critical analysis of the content.



Logging and land clearing for plantations and other industrial activities were reported by all indigenous communities consulted. Apart from a few exceptions such as with community media, information services have failed to support exchange of experiences between indigenous communities.

In contrast to the general situation, there has also been the commencement of indigenous community media, primarily in Ratanakiri. This has concentrated on community video production, but there is a strong push for that to be extended to audio-recordings and community media forums. This work remains under-resourced.

Ownership of information and media.

Local authorities have a much greater access to information and in many ways control much of the information reaching others in the community. While this functions in a positive way in places with local authorities working in collaboration with local people, the dependency on local authorities is dangerous – and where local authorities have become self-interested or co-opted by political parties or business interests (or all of the above), they have been seen to use their control over information to effectively oppress people in communities. A key message, and one that seems to have been internalised in all areas was that “the government is the mother and father” with either the connotation or direct expression that “the people are the children who must follow the government directive”. Because of government power, local people feel like they cannot express their voice and say what they want. They feel all information in the community is controlled by authorities.

There is also an overwhelming perception or belief that people are only meant to be passive recipients of information, with little role in analysing it. The result is that people absorb information uncritically – often as a result of not having balanced or diverse information and media available to them. The dangers of this were seen in Seung Commune, Ratanakiri, in the period from 2001 to 2010. During this period all the villages in the commune lost tenure over the majority of their lands. A large proportion was “sold” by local people to outsiders. The deals were “approved” by local authorities, all apparently contrary to Cambodian law. Those lands now, surrounding most of the villages, are mostly plantations owned by non-indigenous peoples.



Government officials in Battambang address a gathering of community people protesting about an economic land concession.

Seung residents said that the information they had available to them at the time was overwhelmingly in support of selling land. They reported local authorities told them that, if people did not sell their land, it would be taken anyway, or sold by someone else. Such assertions were proven by actual sales of land that they were told could not be reversed.

In this, however, community people also recognise they actually *wanted* to sell land, even though it has now resulted in them being landless and poor. A number of families now have no farming land left and rely on being labourers. This is a complex phenomenon, but it seems that there is a finely balanced set of factors including the inherent strength of the community, information coming to the community, and other factors. Communities often hold out, as did Seung, until their solidarity collapses. After that, a state of depression sets in. Only in Yeak Laom, with greater access to education, does there seem to be the possible emergence of recovery.

Community members noted how the message “the government is the mother and father, the community are the children” can undermine self-respect and promote short-term and counter-productive thinking. Within this environment, it is critical that media and information analysis is strong and that media is not inert but actively *promotes* community identity and culture.

Table 1: Summary of consultation results.

	La Ok	Pok Nyai	Seoung	Yeak Laom	Veal Veng	Phnom Ray	Yeav	Kordontey	Bousra	O'Long
District	O Chum	O Yadou	Borkeo	Ban Lung	Prasat Sambo	Samlot	Sambour	Oral	Pech Chenda	Siem Bouk
Province	Ratanakiri	Ratanakiri	Ratanakiri	Ratanakiri	Kompong Thom	Battambang	Kratie	Kg Speu	Mondolkiri	Stung Treng
No villages consulted	7	5	6	5	1	1	1	1	7	1
Approx population	3500	2500	3000	2500	1800	580	310	300	4500	750
Ethnicity	Kreung	Jarai	5 Tampuen villages, 1 Jarai village	Tampuen	Kuy	Por	Khmer/Kuy	Suy	Bunong	Kuy
Religion	Animist	Animist, some Christian	Animist	Animist, some Christian	Buddhist	Buddhist with Por beliefs	Buddhist	Buddhist	Animist, Buddhist, Christian	Buddhist
Distance to District centre	15km	15km	10km	4km	20km	20km	1km (across river)	25km	4km (village 4)	4km but across the Mekong River
Distance to provincial centre	20km	70km	40km	4km	70km	100	20km	105km	40km	45km
Community solidarity	Strong	Strong	Severely undermined	Severely undermined	Moderately strong	Strong	Weak	strong	Moderately strong	Moderately strong
Main Livelihoods	Rotational (swidden) farming, Sale of cash crops	Rotational (swidden) farming, Sale of cash crops, non timber forest products	Rotational (swidden) farming, Sale of cash crops. Many people now farm labouring.	Subsistence farming, cash cropping, tourism, NGO work	Farming, work outside the province, resin collection,	Rotational (swidden farming), resin other non timber forest products	Paddy rice	Paddy rice and farm(crops)/ NTFP collection	Rotational (swidden) farming, Sale of cash crops. Many people now labouring.	Rotational farming, paddy rice farming and forest produce collection
Mother tongue	Kreung	Jarai	Tampuen/Jarai	Tampuen (but many non IP living as separate community)	Kuy	Por	Khmer	Suy and Khmer. Most adults and 20% of children speak Suy	Bunong	Khmer. Older people speak Kuy.
Estimated level of Khmer spoken	20%	30%	30%	95%	100%	100%	100%	100%	30%	100%
Estimated level of Khmer literacy	5%	5%	5%	40%	30%	30%	65%	50%	10%	30%
Other languages spoken	-	30% or more speak some Vietnamese	Jarai	A growing number of younger people speak English	A few from the village speak some English	30 % of people speak Thai	nil	A number of youth are studying English.	Vietnamese, Lao, some Cham	-
Distance to health centre	15km	15km	10km	4km	20km	20km	1km	1km	4km	4km but across Mekong River

	La Ok	Pok Nyai	Seoung	Yeak Laom	Veal Veng	Phnom Ray	Yeav	Kordontey	Bousra	O'Long
District	O Chum	O Yadou	Borkeo	Ban Lung	Prasat Sambo	Samlot	Sambour	Oral	Pech Chenda	Siem Bouk
Province	Ratanakiri	Ratanakiri	Ratanakiri	Ratanakiri	Kompong Thom	Battambang	Kratie	Kg Speu	Mondolkiri	Stung Treng
School level in villages	1-3	1-3	1-3	7	1-6	1-6	1-6	1-9	1-3	1-6
Distance to high school	20km	30km	10km	4km	45km	10km	1km (across river)	25km to grades 10-12	40km to grades 10-12	4km across the Mekong River
Education issues	Teachers often absent in village schools	Teachers often absent in village schools	One village has bi-lingual education program	Village school are grade 1-3 but commune school is to grade 6	Students report there is discrimination from Khmer students and others	Teachers often absent in village schools	High school involves staying in the district	Teacher are sometimes absent	Many families are poor and children are forced to leave school to work on the farm	Upper secondary school if difficult to attend as it is in the province 45kmaway.
Level of land alienation	low but signs of increasing	Low but significant. Land concessions present.	Extensive. Many families now with insufficient land for farming.	Extensive. Many families now with insufficient land for farming.	High	Little until recently when a 5000ha concession was issued	Large rubber concession has taken forest and farming land.	Large land concessions trying to take the land	High. Land concessions	Negligible
Other natural resource issues	Mining exploration licence issued but protested.	Mining exploration. A number of land brokers are currently attempting to promote land sales	Forest areas important for building materials and back-up food supplies have dwindled.	There have been attempts in recent years to take Yeak Laom Lake away from community management	Land concessions and anarchic land grabbing	Much land is under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Environment.	Dolphin conservation limits fishing. Declining fish stocks	Villager and outsiders are cutting the trees to sale as fire wood and charcoal.	Anarchic logging	The community rely on Prey Lang forest but it is under severe attack from land and plantation developers.
Other concerns	Unsafe migration, tourism, "Hoax NGO".	"Serious" domestic violence in some villages. Some people with no land now labouring.	Increasing poverty and loss of face	Rising issues of drug use, poor attendance at school, domestic violence and unsafe migration	Labour exploitation and sexual exploitation are reported as major issues	People are concerned about possible loss of Por culture	Village extended along the road and difficult to promote solidarity	New comer are searching for new land and natural resource	Elders are no longer respected and there is rapid social change	People are aware that, in the future, the village is likely to also face land issues.
% of families with radio units	50%	50%	70%	50%	Most	Most	Most	92%	90%	Most
National radio service	Weak	Weak	Weak	Strong	Strong. Provincial radio in Khmer is strong too.	Weak. Stronger Thai reception	Strong.	Normal	Strong	Strong provincial station reception
Local indigenous service/day	10 minutes	10 minutes from Ratanakiri. 1 hour from Vietnam.	10 minutes from Ratanakiri.	10 minutes from Ratanakiri.	Nil	Nil	N/A	Nil, only Khmer	Some from Vietnam	Nil, only Khmer
"Independent" Radio	RFA, VOA, Radio Australia	RFA, VOA, Radio Australia	RFA, VOA	RFA, VOA	RFA, VOA	RFA, VOA	RFA, VOA	FM 102-105-99.00, VOA-RFA	RFA, VOA	RFA, VOA

	La Ok	Pok Nyai	Seoung	Yeak Laom	Veal Veng	Phnom Ray	Yeav	Kordontey	Bousra	O'Long
District	O Chum	O Yadou	Borkeo	Ban Lung	Prasat Sambo	Samlot	Sambour	Oral	Pech Chanda	Siem Bouk
Province	Ratanakiri	Ratanakiri	Ratanakiri	Ratanakiri	Kompong Thom	Battambang	Kratie	Kg Speu	Mondolkiri	Stung Treng
Electricity supply	A few generators	A few generators. Some villages have a new power line from Vietnam but high connection costs.	A few generators. Some villages have a new power line from Vietnam but high connection costs.	One village has some grid-electricity from Ban Lung. A few generators.	A few generators. Car batteries.	A few generators. Car batteries.	A few generators. Car batteries.	Generators and batteries	"Private" generator electricity supply which is expensive	Generators and batteries
TV reception	Weak. DTV in coffee shops.	Weak. DTV in coffee shop and 2 or 3 houses.	Weak. DTV in coffee shops.	Strong. DTV in coffee shop and 2 or 3 houses.	50% of families have TV sets. Many stations.	No Cambodian TV, Some Thai TV	Weak. DTV in coffee shops.	National TV is ok DTV is good.	National TV with some Vietnamese TV	20% have TV sets. Many stations. DTV
Topic of interest	Agriculture, health, domestic violence, law	Agriculture, health, domestic violence, law	Entertainment	Entertainment. Many said TV content was not interesting.	Entertainment	Entertainment	Entertainment.	National news, entertainment. Old people land interested in natural resource and agriculture.	agriculture, songs, drama or art performance	Entertainment, natural resource management issues
Main restriction on TV use	Cost of sets and electricity. Content not relevant.	Cost of electricity and TV sets	Cost of electricity and TV sets	Cost of electricity and TV sets	Cost of electricity and TV sets	Cost of electricity and TV sets. No Cambodian TV	Cost of electricity and TV sets	Cost of electricity and TV sets	Cost of electricity and TV sets	Cost of electricity and TV sets
Level of DVD players	5%	a few	About 5%	"significant number"	Many	4 or 5 houses	Many	a few	Many	20%
Main DVD's shown	Music, culture	Jarai culture, Khmer music	Karaoke and Action movies	Karaoke and Action movies	Entertainment. Some from indigenous videos from Ratanakiri	Entertainment	Entertainment. Thai soap operas	Music and party (dance)	Bunong culture and health	Entertainment. Some from indigenous videos from Ratanakiri
Number of people with mobile phones	50%	80%	50%	80%	50%	Currently low but expected to rise when services improves soon	80%	50%	90%	70%
Main users	Youth	Youth	Youth	All but less with elders and women.	Women and elderly men often don't have them	Men	All	Youth, authorities, community activist.	Nearly all	Women and elderly men often don't have them
Services	012, 011 and 097	012, 011 and 097	012, 011 and 097	010, 011, 012, 015, 097 and 098	012, 011 and 097	097	011, 012, 099, 085, 017, 097 and 076	097-088. Also weak 012- 092 - 017-077	097, 011 and 012	097, 012, 011, 088
Number of families with audio devices	90%	90%	90%	90%	90%	90%	90%	50%	60%	90%

	La Ok	Pok Nyai	Seoung	Yeak Laom	Veal Veng	Phnom Ray	Yeav	Kordontey	Bousra	O'Long
District	O Chum	O Yadou	Borkeo	Ban Lung	Prasat Sambo	Samlot	Sambour	Oral	Pech Chenda	Siem Bouk
Province	Ratanakiri	Ratanakiri	Ratanakiri	Ratanakiri	Kompong Thom	Battambang	Kratie	Kg Speu	Mondolkiri	Stung Treng
Main listening	Khmer songs	Khmer music. Some Jarai music	Music	Music	Music	Thai music	Music	Music	Music	Music, News
Level of print media available	Very low	Very low	Very low. Local authorities receive most	High but use is low	Some posters and leaflets	Almost absent	Low. Local authorities receive most	Almost absent	Almost absent	Almost absent
Key media issue	Women and elders excluded from media.	Women and elders excluded from media.	No real exposure to indigenous or community media.	Solidarity and social/cultural cohesion are seen to be a major problem	Information in Khmer is often at too high level	Little Cambodian service. More Thai service	Little media to address the needs of community related to land issues	No Suy media	Most people do not understand the Khmer language media	Little media to address the needs of community related to land/forest issues
Main request 1	Audio media service in local language	Information about natural resources and development plans	To know more about and see/hear community media	People strongly want to have Tampuen language media.	Media in Kuy language, focus on culture, natural resources, and rights abuses.	want to have a local language media service to help maintain Por language	Community media as a tool in supporting community identity and communication	Suy media especially audio	Media in Bunong language	Media in Kuy language,
Main request 2	Community management of media with 70% women's involvement	Jarai language video and audio media that they can oversee and produce	Information about development issues and social issues	Information to assist people develop skills and knowledge suited to living on a very much reduced land base	Want media produced by their communities	People also want better services in Khmer language	Media with a focus on natural resources, and rights abuses.	Natural resources management and indigenous issues	People wish to have their representatives, manage their communities and to take information to outsiders.	Focus on their culture, natural resources and on human rights abuse issues such as labour and sexual exploitation.
Main request 3	Access to media to express their concerns to outsiders	Audio devices for women and elders.	More awareness raising on community media (started in Jan 2011)	Yeak Laom will have to become a service base for other indigenous communities	Want to have opportunities to express their voice to others outside	want media to support their cultural and language survival	An opportunity to have their voice heard in mainstream media	Access to media and a voice out. Cooperation with other IP in Cambodia	People are still not sure yet but would like to make media themselves.	Media produced by their communities with women make most of the decisions about this.

Opportunities and challenges for communication for empowerment

With media for empowerment being so undeveloped for indigenous peoples in Cambodia, there are a number of challenges and opportunities

Challenges

Remote areas, low populations

Most indigenous peoples in Cambodia live in remote areas. The language groups sometimes have small populations. The Soach in Sihanoukville, for example, are only 100 people, but speak Khmer language. At the other end of the spectrum, Tampuen people are perhaps 40,000 in number but have lower level of Khmer speakers.

Government receptivity to community media.

Freedom of assembly, freedom of expression and freedom of information are all said to be under threat in Cambodia. In addition to this, many government staff have had little or no exposure to community media. It is important to work with people in government who are at least open to community media. Awareness-raising for government staff on the systems of community media could produce positive results. Field trips and exposure visits to operational community media should be undertaken. Key community people would also benefit from attending.

Defamation issues

Issues of defamation, falsification of information and incitement are becoming increasingly sensitive in Cambodia. There is a strong need for a system of support for indigenous people involved in media production to understand the legal issues. This could be embedded within a broader, long-term capacity development program around media production skills. Carefully selected NGOs with both legal and training experience would be the best avenue for this education.

Community capacity building – media production

Indigenous people's media production skills are still very low; therefore capacity development for indigenous peoples is essential. This should, however, be done in a way that allows for the development of possibly distinctive community-media and indigenous media styles and approaches.

Appropriate resourcing is required, as is channelling support through specialised agencies skilled in social development, media and indigenous people issue.

While recent advances in media production technology have made media production equipment more accessible to a much large section of society, challenges still exist, especially for low literacy groups. Editing is a problem area. Audio and video editing software generally remain in English language. Khmer versions of simple, intuitive sound editing programs would help a lot.



Recent training sessions have shown that audio media offers opportunities for non-literate people to do recording work if a smaller number of audio editors are also trained.

Community capacity development – management structures

Community capacity to manage media is currently quite low. Support is required for the development of community media management. Vertical structures are noted to be less effective for people’s engagement (Putman 1993) so there is much work in developing appropriate systems. By community groups producing media, evaluating it and setting priorities for future content, the current desire for independent indigenous media may transform into the formation of horizontal management structures or associations. This, however, has to be done in an environment where hierarchical positioning is a cultural norm in Cambodia (O’Leary and Meas 2001, Carlo 2010).

Appropriate resourcing that is flexible and creative is essential– but there is a lack of this type of resourcing in Cambodia. Inappropriate resourcing has already limited community ownership and has even seen the collapse of indigenous organisations.

The Highlanders Association working group aims to assist the representation of indigenous peoples in Ratanakiri. In 2009 it was in near-collapse due to a situation where technical programs and programs with high reporting requirements meant that the working group had become majority staffed by non-indigenous people. At the same time donors and UN agencies were promoting more technical programs and reporting, taking the program further away from its original objectives and values.

To address this situation, a group of three progressive funding partners were called upon to support with core funding simple reporting requirements – one annual report for all donors and one external financial audit per year. Since then, the working group has been able to change back to majority indigenous staff and has been able to focus on its objectives.

Using commercial air time.

Media content appropriate to indigenous people’s needs, if produced, needs to be distributed or broadcast. Broadcast is often very effective and may be possible in some situations and with some content. It is, however, a fact of life in Cambodia that air-time needs to be paid for. While CCHR pays approximately US\$20/hour for their open forum broadcasts, the amount quoted for time on the Ratanakiri provincial radio station, where perhaps the greatest need for specific indigenous people’s content is located, was US\$160/hour.³¹

Even with this system, it is quite possible that more-affluent NGOs and donors will buy the prime listening times, making community media content less accessible to listeners.

Electricity

Most indigenous peoples’ areas are not connected to the central electricity supply. This makes media production and viewing difficult. Recent advances in solar and micro-hydro power offer opportunities for supporting media without supporting rapid economic development in an environment of low governance and low resource security (which has resulted in large scale resource alienation).



³¹ Interview with Department Director December 2010.

Civil society and governance issues.

Strong grassroots civil society is lacking in Cambodia, a country which has one of the highest numbers of development agencies per capita in the world, but one of the most passive civil societies. As 1.5 percent of the population, indigenous people depend on some systematic change throughout Cambodia.

Communication for Empowerment could offer a way forward, but it must also be for other marginalised people in Cambodia (the majority of Cambodians).

Development approaches

Communication for empowerment is unlikely to be successful if disempowering models of development remain supported. Large-scale development programs funded by international financial institutions, multi-lateral donors, and governments of “developed” or “developing” countries represent a root cause of many indigenous people’s problems. Large-scale industrialisation plans, such as the Greater Mekong Subregion program, have been undertaken without indigenous people being consulted in any meaningful way.

Opportunities

A large number of opportunities exist. Many of them relate to community media. Others relate to coverage of indigenous people’s issues in mainstream media. Both, however, are inter-related and it is important to incorporate indigenous people’s involvement even in mainstream media programming.

“Media literacy”

Understanding and analysis of media messages by many community people is not strong. A number of people commented that they just believe what they are told. There is little diversity to promote analysis. There is, therefore, a strong opportunity to assist indigenous peoples with “media literacy” – the ability to evaluate media messages, both explicit and hidden.

The consultation approach developed during this project was seen to promote media analysis. Using indigenous languages, the community consultations teams asked questions of groups, such as women, elders, male youth, female youth, adult men and local authorities. Village level consultations lead to commune level sharing of analysis, focussing not only on the common elements of the analysis, but the different perceptions between groups and between villages.

A number of media literacy training groups exist around the world and have developed approaches that could be adapted to indigenous people’s situation. Their approaches could be reviewed and adopted. Such program could provide immediate results in terms of diminishing the level of deleterious impacts from biased media services.

Community media in general

A number of pilot programs for community media and local language media have already been established. Some communities have positive experience of videos produced by indigenous peoples. These have shown how community media can provide relevant information in local



languages and support cultural identity and community pride. These have proven important in the prevention of land and forest alienation by supporting both information flows and community solidarity.

While the current media projects offer a base to move forward with, community ownership of media production is a key issue. Cambodia does not have a strongly networked indigenous civil society. This is important to the management of community media – and community media is important to building strong civil society.

Community audio recordings

Community people have made strongly requests for indigenous language community radio. A number of pilot programs for community and local language audio media have already established following community consultations. Indigenous peoples' audio-media production units are becoming established. Community feedback systems could then be developed to evaluate programs and set ongoing priorities.



The consultations have raised the awareness of the exclusion or the disadvantaging of women and elder. Women and elders could be promoted in media management and production. Already, following the consultations, community groups have been promoting the idea that 70 percent of people involved in managing or producing community media should be women and elders. This represents a way forward, around the normal male domination of community development work.

Opportunities exist for distributing audio media using memory cards. Players that act as radio receivers, but also accept memory cards or USB memory devices, are available in markets for about US\$15. Many hours of sound recordings can be provided to communities on a single memory card. Songs and entertainment could be added to news and information. Listening can be individually, as families, as groups, or, with an amplifier, the whole community. Sound files could also be loaded onto phones and MP3 players for people to listen to while farming.



In the future, mobile phone services and internet connectivity could be used. 3G services will soon reach many remote areas. 2G services exist in most areas already. Sound files could be sent to a phone provided to a community group, the file downloaded, then copied to memory cards to be distributed (or transferred by Bluetooth to other phones). Alternatively, a small computer in the commune could be equipped with a USB modem and files received through email or internet (such a computer could double as a base for audio editing). Simple internet sites could be developed to give people access to audio and video media.

An “audio newspaper” could be considered to support such a local level media service. Such an option would require a legal entity for registration with the Ministry of Information, and an indigenous peoples’ media NGO could be a good option for this. Equal Access Cambodia has also indicated their willingness to consider support to indigenous peoples. A combination of both could be optimal.

Community content on provincial radio.

Community media production units may also produce material for public broadcast. The government radio station in Ratanakiri supported by UNESCO/UNDP, while not really a “community radio”, could accept community media productions. This represents a great opportunity but air-time would have to be purchased and content could also likely be limited to information other than that on contentious issues.



A radio unit distributed to communities. It operates by winding the handle at the back. Whilst radio is available, it is important to have appropriate content.

The Provincial radios could also be supported to continue their own local language services. There is, however, a strong need to support community feedback systems. Existing community representation and working groups systems that exist in Ratanakiri could take on the role of providing formal feedback. Such a model could also work in other provinces, using indigenous language or Khmer language.

The same model could be adopted and expanded in other provinces. In some of those provinces, other non-government radio stations may also be available. In doing this, however, flexible and stable funding would be required.

Indigenous language dubbing studio

There is a strong opportunity for establishment of studios for dubbing of videos and audio products into indigenous languages or from one language to another. English sub-titling would make such media accessible to English speaking audiences. Also, indigenous people’s media and other appropriate media from around Asia could be made accessible to indigenous peoples in Cambodia through such a dubbing service. Financial resources would be required for this facility. In order to maximise community ownership, such a facility would be best operated by an indigenous organisation or project dedicated to community media, with support from non-indigenous organisations.

Indigenous NGOs.

There are no indigenous peoples managed NGOs supporting media in Cambodia. An opportunity exists to carefully support the development of such indigenous NGOs. Such an NGO must genuinely focus on civil society development and a new model for NGOs in Cambodia may be required. The dominant model of funding and NGO operations has not been producing consistent results and needs to be carefully examined (Bebbington et al 2008, Fowler 2007). Appropriate resourcing is essential (see page 60).

Within this context, however, there is a risk of “elite capture”, a section of the indigenous population becoming removed from others and taking on a dominating or self-interested role. A

number of people from NGOs and from communities have said that they feel that this has already in NGOs in Cambodia. Some NGOs are theoretically managed by indigenous peoples, but the larger or higher systems that direct them are not indigenous in nature and determine advertently or inadvertently, that the operation of the organisation is non-indigenous in nature.

There is, therefore, an opportunity to undertake consultations on traditional indigenous community management and communication styles and consider how those characteristics could be transferred or used to inform the operation of NGOs for indigenous media in Cambodia – so that the NGO(s) significantly reflect the nature of indigenous culture, as opposed to being an inherently non-indigenous structure in operation whilst staffed by indigenous peoples.

International indigenous media movements.

There is already a growing of indigenous media movement around the world. There is also a growing movement related to media for social change (not just indigenous peoples). These movements represent a strong bank of experience and perspectives, and it would be important to tap into that.

Indigenous issues on mainstream radio

As noted in earlier sections, ICSO has been supporting timeslots on national radio whereby indigenous issues can be raised and discussed. This work, should, of course, continue. Community produced media could be used within these timeslots. Community audio media production units could develop this role.

One issue is that most indigenous peoples do not get to listen to the programs. The programs, however, could be provided to provincial radio or distributed using other means.

The open forums facilitated by CCHR offer an established model for use by indigenous peoples. The model is simple – forums are conducted and recorded. Recordings are then broadcast or distributed. Each indigenous language group could conduct forums, the results being broadcast or distributed through community networks and played on listening devices.

Community video production

The community media advisory groups in Ratanakiri, supported by ICSO, could be a good starting point for continuing community guidance of video production, especially if joined by other associations and working groups. There is also an opportunity for a small indigenous peoples' NGO to act as a focal point for supporting such activities. The advantage would be that it could enhance ownership and interest of indigenous peoples.

The audio and video work could complement each other. Community sound recording could be used as a base for development of local community media management structures. Local level groups could join to provide guidance to community video production. Community video teams could be based at district, provincial or national level. Some could be production units specific to languages or language groups.



Community media fairs

Community media fairs are essentially community-organised venues for people to share community media – song, dance, poems, pictures, photos, audio recordings and video. Such fairs could be held for each language group prior as a build up to national indigenous community media fair (then on to a Cambodian indigenous/non-indigenous community media fair). Such fairs provide an opportunity for sharing on any issue of priority to indigenous peoples. If many of the fairs are conducted in villages, they may be quite cheap.

Indigenous issues on mainstream TV

With video production ability, indigenous peoples could make content for mainstream television. Community advisory groups working with ICSO have already overseen the production of a few short “spots” for broadcast on national television. Like content on mainstream radio, this offers potential for non-indigenous people to be exposed to indigenous culture and issues. Again, this would require “buying airtime” on mainstream television.

Awareness raising on IP issues for Cambodian journalists.

There is an opportunity for both increasing and improving the coverage of indigenous peoples’ issues in Cambodian mainstream media. Many journalists could develop a greater understanding of indigenous issues and culture through training and exposure visits. Culture and legal aspects of indigenous peoples’ rights would be high priorities.

It should, however, be noted that editorial control and ownership remain as barriers to balanced reporting on indigenous issues in Cambodia.

International Media

International media is perhaps one part of a system of improved transparency – for all marginalised people, including indigenous peoples in Cambodia.

However, while foreign language media in Cambodia covers many stories, internationally Cambodia is recognised as having a small number of “significant stories”. Khmer Rouge trails and western paedophiles are said to be at the top.

Despite this, the issues of corruption and exploitation of natural resources have been slowly rising in international media. To assist this, NGOs and community groups could be more proficient in their interactions with media. In this regard, there is an opportunity for building communication and collaboration between communities and NGO and media agencies. A number of frank and open exchanges between experienced journalists and civil society groups could be very productive.

Internet – website on IP issues.

If ownership and control over media are key factors, the internet perhaps offers the greatest potential for independent media. With mobile phone and internet connectivity rapidly increasing, the reach of internet is also expanding. With the skills and capacity to use it, internet media and information distribution systems could be developed by indigenous peoples. Where literacy is low, multi-media content could be distributed as opposed to text-based media.

An organisation such as Equal Access, with an understanding both of communication for empowerment and media technology, could undertake a review of possibilities for internet or mobile phone based multi-media distribution options for indigenous peoples in Cambodia.

Appropriate resourcing.

There is obvious need to financially support communication for empowerment for indigenous peoples. It is also essential that this be done in an appropriate way that does not disempower and remove ownership. Most development funding, however, comes through linear planning and management models. Some NGO analysts, such as Fowler (2007 p1), believe that the massive amount of funds spent on official development aid has not produced consistent results. Indeed, to many, aid has now reached a level of public doubt “where rehashing old ideas will not offer satisfactory improvement”³².

As part of the consultations on indigenous people’s media a workshop and other discussions were undertaken to look at this issue of “community ownership” and development systems. Community people and NGOs operating in the field said how the current system promoted hierarchy, imposed programs, and set inflexible plans and budget not matched to community needs. Further, the reporting requirements were onerous and the system generally promoted development agency ownership of development as opposed to ownership by communities or community associations.

Large institutions were requested to look for strong, appropriate and flexible co-financing institutions with a proven track record in supporting rather than suppressing community ownership. Currently it seems that only a small minority of co-financing NGOs are able to *appropriately* support development of community ownership and peoples-led development. These donors include donors such as ICCO, TROCAIRE, McKnight Foundation, MISEREOR and a few others.

We realised that, by approving specific budget items for the projects... MISEREOR has been helping our partner organisations operate in ways that do not always promote, and may in fact hinder, a real sense of ownership on the part of the communities.

Mertineit (2010): Strengthening people-led development processes: a donors perspective.

Larger donors, such as UN agencies, with notoriously mechanistic processes, have an opportunity to learn from these progressive NGO donors. They could also fund out to such NGOs in order that they on-fund to community initiatives or to the small number of other NGO’s that have an approach that is actually empowering.

The recommendations from UNDP’s review of their Cambodia civil society program should also be taken on board.

“...truly genuine action-reflection approaches are the basis for any attempt at strengthening civil society” (Merla 2010 p37).

Donors also need to be willing to fund activities that may heighten analysis of their activities. If communications for empowerment programs are to be supported in Cambodia, they should have a focus on assisting both indigenous communities and NGOs understand these root causes of disempowerment and provide them with options for addressing them. Audio and video media could play an important role in this and help communities and civil society groups understand the larger forces that are often responsible for the local problems they experience.

³² Fowler 2007, p1, Mowles 2007, 2010, Bebbington 2008, Rihani and Geyer 2001, Mosse 2005, Cooke and Dar 2008). Development aid agencies, therefore, need to examine how to provide resources that are actually empowering Racelis, 2008, Bebbinton et al 2008, Thomas, 2008, Mowles 2007, 2010, Mohan, G, 2001



**Conclusions
and
Recommendations**

Indigenous peoples issues

Indigenous peoples in Cambodia are facing severe problems. They are but 1.5 percent of the Cambodian population and are losing their rights to natural resources. Their traditions are being eroded and their cultural identity becoming more diffuse and diverse. Their main concern is land grabbing, economic land concessions (issued contrary to the 2001 Land Law), mining concessions, large-scale hydro-electricity and logging of the forests traditionally the domain of indigenous peoples. It is also clear that much of the alienation of indigenous peoples' territories is happening contrary to Cambodian law and international declarations or treaties. When indigenous peoples resist this alienation, they face intimidation and lack of impartiality by the courts and by authorities.

There are many of the same issues in the education and health sectors. Services are slowly improving but indigenous peoples report widespread barriers to effective access.

At a more general level, neoliberal market-led development is promoting rapid economic growth at the expense of people's rights, undermining democratic processes and fuelling environmental destruction. Large industrialisation plans supported by government and donors work against respect of the rights of indigenous peoples. Controls are not in place to protect people's rights as economic development is aggressively pursued.

Representation of indigenous peoples is very weak, and, in many ways, has been restrained by development interventions. This relates to a general malaise within the field of development which has rendered much "participatory development" largely dysfunctional (Cleaver 2001).

Media systems

Media systems in general in Cambodia are political partisan and largely controlled by the ruling party. Government influences and controls all television and most radio stations are pro-government. Literacy levels are generally low, so newspapers and other print media have low influence. Internet is still inaccessible to the majority of the population, not just because of low service availability but also poverty and lack of training on its use.

Media and information systems for indigenous peoples can be regarded as below average. Indigenous communities receive little independent information related to their issues. Where most people do not speak Khmer, women and traditional elders are most excluded. Local authorities have by far the greatest access to and control over information and media systems. Social divisions are created by this imbalance - resulting in weakening of culture and community cohesion. This allows increased abuse of rights.

Apart from word-of-mouth, radio remains the main source of information through electronic media. Indigenous peoples, however have much lower diversity of radio services when compared to many others groups in Cambodia. Often only government radio is available with small Khmer-language foreign services such as Radio free Asia and Voice Of America. There is a small indigenous language radio service available in Ratanakiri, but this is in need of more independent content, or at least a community feedback system.

Many indigenous communities do not have access to television, owing largely to lack of electricity supply and the cost of TV sets. Often a small number of households in indigenous communities use batteries or generators to power television sets combined with DVD players. In a few cases this has allowed indigenous community media to be seen, but in most cases pop culture videos in Khmer are shown.

Mobile phones are reaching almost all communities. Phones are used for social networking, sometimes related to issues of community. Mobile phone services also represent an opportunity for digital producing and distributing of content to fill the gaps in independent media.

Word-of-mouth is still a very important mode of communication. Outside information often comes to communities through Khmer speaking indigenous peoples and from local government. In some areas NGO's are restricted by local government. Indigenous communities are consequentially very vulnerable to local government domination.

Despite this (or because of this) many opportunities exist for communications for empowerment. The focus needs to be on *empowerment*, rather filling people with information. Topics and priorities need to be primarily decided by networks/associations of indigenous peoples – which allow them to ensure media is useful and also network/association building. As such, diverse media can be used as a social development tool by indigenous peoples, instead of a domination tool by development agencies and government. It is the right to decide and manage that is the most import for indigenous peoples – to allow them direct experience of media production leading to more proactive engagement with non-community media.

Where possible, funds for community media should be channelled through co-financing NGOs specialising in empowerment and social development support, preferably with a focus on social media. Donor systems such as those of larger bi-lateral agencies or UN agencies could fund to such a facility thereby allowing community level decision making and community action learning (as opposed to standard linear approaches to planning). Such a facility could fund could a number of actions below:

1. Local level indigenous content production and distribution in order to offer indigenous peoples direct experience of media production and management.
2. Indigenous people producing content for broadcast on 'mainstream' radio and television, and increase local language content in existing media.
3. Production by established media content production agencies/organisations if they are operating in genuine partnership with indigenous peoples, community forums, media fairs, and content for radio, television, audio devices and mobile phones.
4. Capacity development for provincial government radio stations in the field of community media and community prioritised media.

	Key Recommendations
Media Environment	All stakeholders should work with government to increase government exposure and receptivity to community media and communication for empowerment in general. Many in government would welcome the opportunity to see different models of media. For example many government staff working in the ministry and departments of information could support community media if they were more aware and exposed to it.
Awareness raising on communication for	The video produced as part of the consultation should be rounded out with material from all areas consulted then prepared in a way that provides access to the issues to a wide variety of people, including indigenous peoples who do not speak Khmer.

<p>empowerment</p>	<p>Pilot projects to develop actual experience in community media should continue so that community media is visible as a viable alternative to non-community media. The experiences in these pilot programs should be well documented.</p> <p>Experiences of community media and communication for empowerment from around Asia (and more widely) need to be documented and made available to all stakeholders in Cambodia, including indigenous community people who do not speak Khmer. A series of cross-visits within Asia is highly recommended.</p> <p>Information sessions and workshop should be conducted with a broad range of NGOs, community groups, development agencies and with government.</p>
<p>Community media</p>	<p>Donors and development programs should support and enhance existing community media initiatives as a balance to media more owned by NGOs, corporations and party-political influences. A diversity of and engagement with media is an essential step in building the understanding of the role of media in indigenous society.</p> <p>Support the establishment of indigenous peoples’ organisations to support people-led and managed community media. This, however, needs to be done carefully, in a way that explores the nature of indigenous peoples’ management and communication, attempting to maximise indigenous cultural traits into such organisations. An initial step would be the slow establishment of an “elders” council as a Board, starting with the traditional concept of elders and people experienced and competent in not only indigenous systems but the non-indigenous systems inherent within an NGO.</p> <p>Community media should be allowed to focus on the development of community decision making, recognising that, women and elders should be given a leading role in community media management. To complement this, indigenous youth could engage in media production as active members of the community operating in partnership with other age groups.</p> <p>Promote audio media at local level. Video could be supported at district level or above. Different channels for media, including broadcasting, should be considered.</p> <p>Support, through appropriate NGOs, and with appropriate funding, the capacity development of indigenous peoples in the field of media production, including legal aspects of media and voice.</p> <p>Support the establishment of indigenous language dubbing studios to allow indigenous media to be open to non-indigenous peoples and allow non-indigenous media of priority to indigenous communities to be dubbed into indigenous languages.</p> <p>Support community-organised media fairs for indigenous peoples. These could be held at a number of different levels (district, provinces, inter-province) and be used for sharing of any forms of indigenous media content and approaches.</p> <p>Conduct Open Forums in indigenous languages. Forums recordings could be</p>

	<p>distributed to indigenous communities.</p> <p>Support indigenous peoples to conduct field days and forums on topics selected for community media, to be held in villages, allowing indigenous peoples interested in exchanging ideas to do so in an informal and semi-structured manner.</p> <p>Support field trips and exposure visits conducted to build government and community understanding of community media models in Asia.</p> <p>Support linkages between Cambodian indigenous peoples and indigenous people's media and peoples' movements in Asia and other regions of the world.</p>
Media literacy	<p>Initiate media literacy with involvement of community media, including a continuation of a program of community consultations on media systems and needs established as part of this project.</p> <p>A general educational program on media literacy and the role of media in society is also required.</p>
Mainstream Radio and television	<p>Support indigenous people to use mainstream radio and television to build a greater awareness of indigenous issues in the non-indigenous population. This means supporting indigenous peoples groups to analyse non-indigenous people's perceptions of indigenous peoples and identify key actions/messages to address gaps in knowledge, stereotypes and misunderstandings.</p> <p>Support the Ratanakiri Provincial Government Radio indigenous language content. The program should remain supported and should be encouraged to focus on community feedback systems. A longer term NGO support to the station would be much preferable to the current UNESCO ad-hoc support.</p> <p>Develop and implement training on indigenous culture and issues for Cambodian journalists. That would require analysis of media people's perceptions of indigenous peoples followed by awareness raising on key issues. One method could be to conduct forums between international media journalists and civil society groups (community groups and NGOs). These could also be used as a way of improving media relations skills of civil society and indigenous peoples groups (by better understanding of international and national media systems and needs). Already many media agencies have expressed a desire to raise indigenous issues but note a lack of information in a format appropriate to their needs.</p>
Appropriate resourcing.	<p>Encourage development agencies to channel funds to NGOs and co-financing organisations experienced in "peoples-led development". Such systems are much better suited to supporting indigenous media initiatives.</p> <p>Complement or replace mainstream development planning and reporting processes with action research approaches that allow enhanced community control over development and media decisions.</p>
Linkages with non-indigenous	<p>Promote communication for the many other marginalised peoples of Cambodia. The majority of people in Cambodia are marginalised. Different</p>

peoples.	groups need to be supported to link together. An isolated sectoral approach needs to be avoided.
Development models	There needs to be a review of development models and programs in Cambodia. Programs such as the Greater Mekong Subregion program are a major root cause of disempowerment and disenfranchisement of indigenous peoples. Development agencies interested in empowerment of indigenous peoples (including indigenous peoples groups) need to engage with such programs and raise awareness of the impacts of such program in indigenous peoples. This will require partnership with key people within those agencies and communication for empowerment should include supporting indigenous peoples analyse these programs.

Appendices



Appendix 1: Statement by Indigenous People September 12, 2004

Indigenous People and Indigenous Communities

- *We, the indigenous people in Cambodia, like other citizens of Cambodia, are happy to fulfil our role as citizens of Cambodia.*
- *We have discovered that all of the different indigenous communities have a lot in common.*
- *We, the indigenous people are those people with an indigenous identity that comes from our ancestors, and we all respect our traditions and way of life.*
- *It is indigenous people, especially elders and village headmen, who can define in more detail who are within indigenous ethnicities and indigenous communities.*
- *Some of our indigenous peoples have lost some parts of our traditions. Some of us no longer speak our traditional languages. This does not mean that we are no longer indigenous people. We still retain many other parts of our indigenous identity.*
- *Our communities are generally defined by a common belief in a village Neak Ta or Arak. Ceremonies to these Neak Ta or Arak are generally performed on an annual basis with many variations and similarities between indigenous groups.*
- *Our indigenous communities have a traditional form of management that is different from the new structure that includes village and commune authorities. Traditional structures are usually characterised by traditional leaders, elders and often involve participation by the entire village in decision-making.*
- *The new structures imposed from the outside have been eroding the role of traditional structures and systems and this is of great concern to our communities.*

Indigenous Management of Land and Natural Resources

- *We traditionally manage and use a very wide range of land and other natural resources including forest lands, agricultural lands, water resources, etc.*
- *Most of our indigenous communities have been conducting rotational swidden agriculture for a very long period of time and in most cases it is an integral part of our culture.*
- *The traditional boundaries of our forests and community lands are generally defined by agreement with neighbouring communities, elders playing a significant role in this.*
- *In most areas, these traditional boundaries are clearly defined by mountains, streams, ponds,*
- *Sometimes traditional village areas involve areas of forest of joint management between more than one community or have multiple village use rights.*
- *All of these lands that indigenous communities have traditionally used remain important to our indigenous peoples' livelihoods and culture.*
- *Traditionally we do not sell land to people outside of our ethnicity. This is considered to be a serious violation of indigenous culture and is not allowed.*
- *We allocate individual user rights to families within our communities. This is generally done following the traditions and customs of each ethnicity.*
- *Those individual rights over community land do not include the right to sell. Land is considered to be community property. It is allocated to families or individuals within the community for use but not for sale.*
- *Individual and family rights over community land can be passed on to younger generations within the same family and can be transferred to others in the community.*
- *If our community sells land to outsiders, we believe that this will create great problems for the life and future of our indigenous communities.*

Appendix 2: Outline of the consultation process

The community consultations done as a part of this project included a number of different stages:

1/. Early August 2010: The consultant, Graeme Brown, attended a workshop of fellow researchers in Bangkok, with the UNDP Communication For Empowerment team.

2/. Mid August 2010: Consultation with NGOs in Ratanakiri Province – How best to support an indigenous peoples working group for consultations in the province? It was decided that a number of NGO's would contact community people they work with in order to develop a team of 25 people from all major ethnicities/languages groups, with a balance of men and women and older people and younger people. These people would be supported by a small team of indigenous NGO staff seconded from a number of the NGOs.

3/. Mid August 2010: Communication to various donor requesting supporting funds

4/. Late August 2010: A meeting of a National Advisory Group on community media (indigenous and non-indigenous) to discuss the project and select initial target areas for consultation. Ratanakiri, Kratie, Kompong Thom and Battambang were selected. A second phase was also discussed. If funding could be arranged, indigenous communities in Kompong Speu, Stung Treng and Mondolkiri were to be consulted. A phase 3 could then branch out to non-indigenous communities.

5/. Early September 2010. Orientation for the NGO team. The C4E focus questions developed from C4E work in Nepal were adapted for draft use in Cambodia and then translated

6/. Mid September 2010: A 5 day workshop for the community consultation team in Ratanakiri. Also attending were 2 people from each of Kratie, Kompong Thom and Battambang. The workshop was to develop an understanding of the goals and objectives of the project, to discuss media systems and ownership. The focus questions for consultations were further simplified and clarified. For Ratanakiri, three teams for each of the major language groups were formed (Tampuen, Kreung, Jarai). Suggested target areas and times were drafted.

7/. Late September 2010: All Ratanakiri and other-province people conducted a consultation for 2 days at La Ok Village, La Ok commune, O Chum District (Kreung language area).

- The community were asked what “groups” exist in their community. They replied
 1. elders
 2. authorities and committees
 3. older women
 4. female youth
 5. male youth

Mixed groups of interviewers, with at least one Kreung speaker per group, interviewed a group. This process took 1.5 days and generally involved 10 community people per group. The last half day was contrasting and sharing the results from each of the groups. An evening cultural event was used to celebrate the workshop activities. People report that they felt encouraged to be asked about their media needs. The commune council suggested that all villages in the commune needed to be consulted in a similar way.

8/ Late September 2010: Workshop of community consultation teams to analyse the process and the results for La Ok village and improve the methodology.

9/ Consultations by Ratanakiri language groups (Kompong Thom, Kratie and Battambang people still in attendance):

Kreung

Date	Village	Number of community people involved	Number of days
20-22 Sept 2010	La Ok	70	2
04-05 Oct 2010	Kouk Ampil	30	2
08-09 Oct 2010	Kouk Poy	80	2
11-12 Oct 2010	Pee	100	2
15-16 Oct 2010	Raya	50	2
25-26 Oct 2010	Kralong	30	2
28-29 Oct 2010	Kam	70	2

Jarai

Date	Village	Number of community people involved	Number of days
8-9 Oct 2010	Pok Thom	60	2
10-11 Oct 2010	Yang	50	2
12-13 Oct 2010	Lam thom	80	2
14-15 Oct 2010	Lam touch	30	2
16-17 Oct 2010	Pok Touch	67	2

Tampeun: Seoung commune

Date	Village	Number of community people involved	Number of days
13-14 Oct 2010	Yem	40	2 (night)
2-3 Nov 2010	Klick	60	2
4-5 Nov 2010	Sa march	30	2
6-7 Nov 2010	Serng	75	2
8-9 Nov 2010	Jet	45	2

Tampuen: Yeak Laom commune

Date	Village	Number of community people involved	Number of days
3-4 Nov 2010	La Po and sil	79	2
5 Nov 2010	Chree	32	1
6-7 Nov 2010	Lon and Phnom	60	2

10/. Mid October 2010: Ratanakiri Workshop on community ownership conducted in Pee Village, La Ok commune, O Chum district, Ratanakiri. 50 key indigenous people from around the province gathered to discuss:

- What is community ownership of development?
- How important is it?
- What is government, company and NGO and community ownership of media?
- What is required for community ownership of media (to ensure it meets needs)

11/. Mid October 2010: Update meeting for UN, donors and NGOs in Phnom Penh

12/. Late October 2010: Consultation team training (2 days) for and in Kompong Thom, Kratie and Battambang.

13/. Late October 2010: Consultation in Kompong Thom, Kratie and Battambang .

Date	Village	Number of community people involved	Number of days
24-27 Oct 2010	Veal Veng, Kg Thom	55	4
24-27 Oct 2010	Phnom Ray, Battambang	60	4
24-28 Oct 2010	Yeav, Kratie	30	4

- 4 days includes 2 days of training for consultation teams

14/. Early December 2010: The community consultations teams presented a summary of their findings to a national community media fair held in Kompong Thom province.

15/ Mid December 2010: Initial training for the Ratanakiri community consultation teams on audio recording. This was to start to enable people to make audio stories following the priorities established by the various commune level meetings in Ratanakiri. A short audio story of the consultation teams and one on Yeak Laom Lake were made as learning exercises.

16/. Late December 2010: Workshop with the consultation project people and community media advisory group supported by ICSSO. This workshop was so that everyone could review the results coming from the consultations. People decided to amalgamate the groups saying that community media should involve consultations, audio story production and less-frequent video story production. Community media should also be organised by language group nit by district and it is important to increase the opportunities for women and elders to take lead roles.

17/. Consultations in Kompong Speu and Stung Treng

Date	Village	Number of community people involved	Number of days
6-11 Feb 2011	Kordontey village, Trapeang Chor commune, Oral District, Kompung Speu	55	2
07-09 March 2011	O'Long village Siem Bouk District, Stung Treng	60	2.5

18/. Consultations in Bousra commune, Mondolkiri

Date	Village	Number of community people involved	Number of days
15/03/2011	Poutit village	30	1
16/03/2011	Pouraing village	41	1
17/03/2011	Bousra village	42	1
18/03/2011	Lame village	44	1
19/03/2011	Poulu village	66	1
20/03/2011	Pouchar village	37	1
21/03/2011	Poutil village	69	1

Appendix 3: Case studies

Ratanakiri Province

Case Study 1: La Ok commune, O Chum District, Ratanakiri province (7 villages)

The community

La Ok commune consists of seven indigenous Kreung villages approximately 20 kilometres from the provincial capital of Ratanakiri. The average number of people per village is around 500 people. Consultations were undertaken in all seven villages.

La Ok is a red soil area with farming and significant areas of forest. One large area of forest exists to the north but there is border dispute with villages in that district.



Two of the villages in the commune have been registered as legal entities by the Ministry of Interior. This allows them to apply for a communal land title for each of their villages. This is thought to be a step toward land security but does not necessarily represent full land security. Community people still realise the need for strong community solidarity to retain control over their resources. There is higher than average harmony between the community and commune council. The commune council has generally not been abusing people's rights.

Almost all people are of Kreung ethnicity and practice animism. People rely on swidden (rotational) farming with some family-scale cashew nut plantations. Forest areas provide back-up food and materials for housing. In recent years, many traditional bamboo-clad houses have been replaced with wooden houses with iron roofs. This has largely been attributed to the sale of cashew nuts and other cash crops such as soya bean.

Almost all people in the commune speak Kreung as their mother tongue. Only 20 percent speak Khmer and less than that read and write Khmer. The residents estimated the functional written literacy to be about five percent.

Development Issues

There are quite a few health problems and no service in the commune. Often health problems are dealt with in traditional ways, relying on spirit mediums to address the cause of illness. There have also been health education services arriving in the communities, with a focus on issues such as hygiene, malaria and Tuberculosis. There is a health centre in the district, 5-15 kilometres away. A referral hospital exists in the



provincial centre 20 kilometres away. There were numerous reports by community people that these services are being used, but they were also expensive and unreliable.

There are primary schools in the villages to lower primary level (grades 1 to 3), but teachers are not from the communities and are often absent. Non-formal education schemes had been supported by a number of NGOs and have been working on building literacy education in Kreung (using Khmer script) and in Khmer.



There has been some land alienation in the past but much of the land is still with the villages. As such it is one of the communes in Ratanakiri that is faring better than average with regard to the extent of land tenure loss. Despite this, there are some signs that community solidarity is giving way. One village was in discussion to sell land to a Vietnamese company.

Of major concern has been a mining exploration concession issued by the national Ministry of Mines and Energy over La Ok commune and other communes in O Chum. La Ok commune people complained about this, collected funds and sent a person to take the issue to media and to officials in Phnom Penh. Key in this was the active support and advocacy by a number of commune councillors – something not present in many other communes. The result of advocacy has been an “agreement” that La Ok commune will not have any mining exploration.

The mining issue, however, remains a concern because mining in other communes nearby could also affect La Ok too. The community respondents said they are largely “in the dark” as to the possible impacts of mining and the plans for mining. They have received some information through NGO workshops but request much more.

Some other modern influences are also arriving in the villages. People have started coming to villages to encourage women to work as domestic servants in Malaysia. A woman in O Chum commune recently went to Malaysia and returned to describe the experience negatively. La Ok people want to know about this issue and worry about possible influences on their youth.

Also, during the consultations, a group of 30 European tourists arrived in La Ok village, guided by a Khmer tourist guide associated with a foreign-operated hotel in the provincial capital. There was no previous communication to the village and the group was taken around the village to photograph people without their consent. The village and commune authorities did not know how to handle this issue, felt it needed management, felt there were opportunities for income generation, but said they lacked the knowledge to do so.

In one unusual incident, a “conservation NGO” came to one village and told people they can pay US\$100 to get an “NGO job and uniform”. Some people gave them money. Others commented they have no way of really knowing if it was a hoax or not.

Media Services

Radio: Approximately 50 percent of families in the commune have radios. The national station service is weak and “not worth listening to”. The provincial reception is strong. It has 10 minutes per day in Kreung the villagers said the content is not what they want to listen to or in line with their needs. Some people listen to national radio, relayed from the provincial centre, but said was of little interest to them. Some Khmer language services which are said to be more independent come through Radio Free Asia and Voice of America.



Sometimes, however, the Short Wave signal is hard to get. Radio Australia is also available, but the signal is weak.

Television: There is generally no television service (some can see fuzzy pictures but no sound) and no mains electricity. Some people watch Khmer language television via digital satellite TV in coffee shops or when they go to the district and provincial markets. People said they are most interested information on Agriculture, health, domestic violence, and law. Some people watch television in the villages with TV sets powered by battery or generator. It was reported that more people would have television if they could afford it. Some residents said that all television services were in Khmer or foreign languages and the content was not particularly relevant to indigenous peoples.

Most TV sets are coupled with DVD players but still less than 5 percent of households have them. NGOs have shown videos about health and other issues. Also some health companies selling drugs use videos screenings. There are some local language videos and they are good. Much appreciated are video about Kreung arts. Khmer videos are hard or impossible to understand.

Phones: There are no land line phones in the commune. About 50 percent of people have mobile phones. Elders and women have fewer phones than others. Youth use phones both for music devices and for communicating with friends. A few can access Internet via phone - they went to Ban Lung town to learn from their friends. 012, 011 and 097 are strong services. People charge phones using batteries or from motorbike batteries. Some villages have generators for video at night and this is also when phones are charged.



Audio devices: Focus group discussions reported that 10 percent of people have cassette players, 30 percent have CD players, and 50 percent have phones for playing audio. Therefore, nearly 90 percent have something for listening to audio. People generally listen to Khmer music but NGOs and community groups have also produced a number of Kreung language songs.

Print Media: Paper-based media is minimal and is mainly in the form of documents obtained when people go to workshops. Most are in Khmer and sometimes people obtaining them will



than pass information on orally in Kreung. A number of NGO and government extension posters also arrive in the villages. Most have pictures and text. Often they contain health, agriculture, education and electoral information.

Media Issues

Language is a key issue in information and media in La Ok commune. Generally, women and elders speak much less Khmer than men. Since most information coming to the villages is in Khmer language, it excludes a large proportion of women and elders.

People strongly want to have Kreung language media and radio with a special focus on culture and on natural resource management issues. Women also wanted health information. In discussion about the

possibilities of a community audio media program in the commune, a number of women expressed the desire to take a major role in its management, indicating the level of marginalisation they feel and the willingness to take an active role despite cultural norms against it. It is also interesting to note that men within community focus group discussions also recognised this need, accepting a goal of 70 percent of community media management groups being women.

With regard to expressing a voice to the outside world, many people expressed frustration at not being able to have their voice heard. Most would like to use all forms of media to get their issues out to others.

Case Study 2: Pok Nyai commune, O Yadou District, Ratanakiri province (5 villages)

The community

Pok Nyai commune consists of five Jarai villages located on the red soil areas close to the border with Vietnam, 70 kilometres from the Ratanakiri Provincial Centre.

Jarai people have been effectively divided by the Cambodian-Vietnamese border – Jarai people are also located in adjacent areas of Pleiku province in the central highlands of Vietnam. Family ties still exist but there has been a significant cultural difference established across the border.



Approximately 30 percent of Jarai people speak Khmer. Some speak Vietnamese and Tampuan. More speak Vietnamese than speak Khmer. Women and elders speak less Khmer than men, hence are at greater disadvantage when media is in Khmer.

Most people retain their animist religion but there has been a significant number of people have converted to Christianity. One village, Lom village, has two parts now – one Jarai religion and the other Christian (now more Christians than animists).

Most people rely on swidden agriculture, supported by non-forest timber products. A number of villages also have paddy fields. People “have always” been in Pok Nyai – even in Pol Pot times they were there, with only some going to paddy fields in Som Thom commune. Previously the village of Pok Thmey was located away from the main road. In the 1990s people were encouraged to settle beside the road as part of “development”. Some did not want to, particularly older people, did not move, so two villages formed from one.

“some people, especially older people, did not believe it when the village chief said there would be a sealed road made by the Vietnamese. They said they would not see it in their lifetime. Some were right – because they died – but the road did come”, Young Jarai man

Development Issues

In 2010 the work to seal the highway from the Vietnamese border to Ban Lung (70km from Pok Nyai) was completed with a loan from the Vietnamese government. This is part of the regional and national development plans to have a major economic development zone from Vietnam to Thailand across Cambodia. There is an international border crossing to Vietnam and an “international market” being constructed near the border. A casino is also being built.

The majority of people in Pok Nyai are Jarai people. In previous years there were a number of land deals signed by the old commune council. There has been some in-migration of non-indigenous people. The new commune council was stronger in supporting community people’s land rights but some now say they have been pulled into supporting outside powers.

With national and international development plans, Pok Nyai communities also have a number of concessions imposed on them. There are land concessions for rubber and a 36,000ha mining exploration concession to an Australian company (extending over adjacent communes). There is also intense pressure for (illegal) land selling, with companies and individuals currently (and consistently) attempting to get people to sell community land.



These new issues come after a long history of illegal logging, something which continues, often performed by Vietnamese people from across the border.

As in most other communes, education services are low. Schools in villages are up to grade three only. The school at the commune centre goes to lower primary. For study above grade six, up to grade nine, students must go to the district centre 15km away, at O Yadou district. For study above Grade nine, students must go to Borkeo District, approximately 30kilometers away.

Health services are scant. There is only a health post at the neighbouring commune of Som Thom. The district health centre is approximately 15 kilometres away.

At this stage, there has not been trafficking or unsafe migration. Some people have no land left but are working as labourers locally for 10000r (\$2.50) to 15000 (\$3.75) per day. Of serious concern is a domestic violence.

“Now there is domestic violence everywhere – men do not respect women’s rights anymore”. Young Jarai man.

“Before, people did not dare to be violent with their wives – it was not allowed. Now some men even beat their mothers”. Older Jarai man.

“Some (Jarai) police have three wives. They can do this because they have power – more power than culture and community. Money and power have changed the situation”. Older Jarai man.

Media Services

Radio: About 50 percent of families have radios. The national station reception is weak. The provincial reception is strong. It has 10 minutes per day in Jarai but is not aligned with needs. Some Khmer language service comes through Radio Free Asia and Voice of America. There are also some Vietnamese services available to the people who speak Vietnamese (a higher percent than people speaking Khmer). The Vietnamese service from Pleiku has one hours a day in Vietnamese Jarai language (some slight differences with the Jarai spoken in Cambodia). On weekends it is 1.5 hours/day. Often the programming includes Jarai songs and music, information about land issues, market prices, but it was noted that it lacked strong information on rights.

Television: There is generally no television service and no mains electricity (though there is an electricity line from Vietnam being installed along the highway). Some people watch TV via

digital satellite TV in coffee shops or when they go to the market (in Khmer language). 2 or 3 Jarai families have DTV.

A small number of households have DVD and television sets. There are some local language videos and they are much appreciated. These come from the community video production project that has a community advisory group at district level. Much appreciated by elders are video about Jarai arts. Younger people “don’t want” Jarai videos. They want Khmer music. Some said Jarai Karaoke would be good.

To run televisions, electricity is required. A power line from Vietnam has just been installed but people in Jarai villages say they cannot afford the connection fees or the cost of wiring to their houses. A few families have generators.

Phones: About 80 percent of people have phones. Elders and women have fewer phones than others. Youth use phones for music devices. 012, 011 and 097 are strong services (097 the strongest). People charge phone using batteries or from motorbike batteries. Some villages have generator for video at night and this is also when phones are charged. Many people have spare batteries in order to have a longer period without having to re-charge.

Audio devices: 10 percent of people have cassette players, 30 percent have CD players, 50 percent have phones for sound audio. Therefore, about 90 percent have something for listening to audio. The predominant use of these devices (apart from radio) is listening to music. Most of that is Khmer music with some Jarai music. Young people will get music from O Yadou market and share them others using bluetooth transmission to other people’s phones.

Print Media: The print media is hardly mentioned in Pok Nyai. Literacy levels are very low. Some posters are arriving for public use in villages. Most focus on health or election issues, with some on land issues and agricultural information. Some companies are also distributing advertising posters.

Media Issues

People are facing many changes and issues imposed on them and feel they are not equipped to cope with that. Land and forest issues are a strong priority. They want that reflected in the media available to them: people have had little or no information about the scale and nature of the development plans that are being imposed.

“the information we get about development comes as rumours. If you are not in the power group, if you are just a normal person, then you can’t know what is happening. Village and commune chiefs sign things but we don’t know what”. Older Jarai man.

In O Yadou, there has been a pilot project of community video production and the effects of this can be seen in Pok Nyai. People are aware of the concept of indigenous community media and people express a strong desire for Jarai language media that they can oversee and produce. They said that the current Jarai language radio program on the provincial radio (10 minutes/day) is mainly national and party news and has “unusual or incorrect” translations.

People “really want” land rights support and information. Jarai language information is requested. That would be best in audio form that can be transferred from people to people by bluetooth transfers. But this would still leave many women and elders without information. People do not yet have but have seen “speakers” that can receive memory cards and think they would be good. For non-sensitive information a loud speaker could be used to reach all in the

village. People thought that elders and community people could gain the acceptance of the commune authorities for this mode of dissemination.

Case Study 3: Seoung commune, Borkeo District, Ratanakiri province (6 villages)

The community

Seoung commune is approximately 10 kilometres from the district centre of Borkeo. It is an area on the prime lands of the Ratanakiri volcanic plateau. Most of Borkeo district has been a target of land alienation since the early 1990s. The highway from the Vietnamese border to Ban Lung was recently sealed exacerbating the issues (though even just the plan for a road created enough pressure to lead to most of the community land being lost).



The commune has six villages – five Tampeun villages and one Jarai village. All people in the six villages speak their own Tampuen language. A few speak Khmer. In the one Jarai village (Yasom) most people speak Jarai and Tampuen. Many people in the Tampuen villages also speak Jarai.

Development issues

There are massive and widespread land problems. In late 1990s and early 2000s the commune was quite strong. During that period, a 4-star military general acquired a large area of land but, with the help of a legal NGO, villagers challenged and won a key out-of-court settlement. Their land was returned.

From about 2004, there was a rise in land values. People were also told they had to sell land, and that it was best to do so. One village started to sell land. Commune and district officials encouraged this illegal selling and signed approvals (for commissions in return). The community social structures started to collapse and land selling spread to all villages. There were some voices raising the issue of illegality of the sales and the problems that could result – but this was outweighed by the message saying it was better to sell before the land was taken. The community was also told they are the “children” who must follow what their local authorities tell them to do. Unfortunately their commune and district authorities did not have community interests at heart.

Now a number of families have no farming land left and are labourers. Most other families only have some land left (not enough to support rotational swidden farming), and that land is away from the village. Most villages are now surrounded by rubber and soya bean plantations. In summary, it is quite a depressed community. Most people now see that selling land has made them poorer.

Health and education services are scant. There is one village that has an NGO/government bilingual education for primary school.

Media services

Radio: About 70 percent of families have radios. The national station service is weak and not worth listening to. The provincial reception is strong. It has 10 minutes per day in Tamuen and

Jarai but it is not aligned with community needs. Some Khmer language service comes through Radio Free Asia and Voice of America. These are valued but not significant in weight to the voice that came through local authorities.

Television: There is generally no television service (some can see fuzzy picture but no sound) and no mains electricity. Some people watch TV via digital satellite TV in coffee shops or when they go to the market (in Khmer language).

Less than 5 percent of households have DVDs and television sets. There have not really been any local language videos available. Khmer videos are hard or impossible to understand. Karaoke is played as are action movies.

Phones: About 50 percent of people have phones. Elders and women are less likely to have phones. Youth use phones as music devices and also for talking with friends. 012, 011 and 097 are strong services. People charge phones using batteries or from motorbike batteries. Some villages have generators for video at night and this is also when phones are charged.

Audio Devices: CD players and cassette players are used for listening to music.

Print media: Print media is largely in the realm of local authorities. Some people have been accessing NGO printed material on rights, health and education. One village in the commune has a bilingual education program that has been training primary school teachers and promoting a community managed school.

Media Issues

Seoung commune has had little exposure to community media and has only received non-indigenous media (apart from the provincial radio, which they are not overly impressed with). As a result, media in general is not given much significance. People would like to know more about and see/hear community media.

Again, like in Pok Nyai, people are largely unaware of the development plans that are affecting them – but are reeling from their impacts. There are the initial stages of what could become serious social problems, such as alcoholism, drugs, human trafficking, unsafe migration and domestic violence. Media and information may be required to assist the communities dealing with this.

There is an overwhelming sense of loss of pride and self-esteem in Seoung. Like in Yeak Laom (see below), they have lost many of their resources but could still lose more, including their indigenous identity. In this context there is a strong need for media and information that reinforces indigenous and community identity. In an environment of weak rule of law, it is likely that community cohesion will be the main factor in preventing damaging social issues and ongoing exploitation.



Case Study 4: Yeak Laom commune, Ban Lung, Ratanakiri province (5 villages)

The community

Yeak Laom is perhaps the commune in Ratanakiri most affected by immigration and modern influences. It is located just four kilometres from the provincial centre of Ban Lung. The establishment and growth of Ban Lung has been pushing the Tampuen communities to the extremities of their traditional area. In recent times there have been many non-indigenous people taking land in the commune. While the different cultures occupy much of the same space, they are still quite separate in their communities. Most Tampuen people retain their animist religion, but a significant number of people have converted to Christianity.



All Tampuen people speak Tampuen as their mother tongue. Approximately 95 percent also speak some Khmer: only a few older people do not speak much Khmer. Consequently, Khmer language media is accessible to people in Yeak Laom.

Development Issues

Yeak Laom commune gets its name from the Yeak Laom Lake - a circular volcanic lake surrounded by forest, a national tourist attraction and also an indigenous icon. After the Pol Pot and communist eras, the lake was run by the tourism department, or by members of the police and military- as a Karaoke and recreation site. Local Tampuen people also started farms around the lake. In 1995 an international NGO started work to assist rehabilitation of the lake area, and



in 1997 the lake was handed over to a community committee under a 25-year lease. Income from entrance fees now pays for the lake area to be maintained and an environmental and eco-tourism site managed by Tampuen people.

In 2009 and 2010 there were attempts by the provincial government to hand the lake over to a company – despite the 25-year lease to the community.³³ This follows a number of other concessions issued over Yeak Laom community areas.

³³ http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cerd/docs/ngos/NGO_Forum_Cambodia76.pdf contains illustrated case study.

The lands around the lake and in all other areas in Yeak Laom commune there has seen extensive and anarchic land selling and encroachment. One village, previously located along the road to Yeak Laom Lake, has dissolved, the land is now owned by non-indigenous peoples. People from their village have acquired land in other areas or have moved to live away from the road on their farms. A number of Tampuen families (maybe 20 percent) now do not have farming land and rely on wage labour. Most people also now cannot practice rotational farming and are growing cash crops on their remaining land. A number of younger people now work as NGO staff.

The previous commune council is said to have played a major role in supporting and promoting illegal sales of land. They were never reprimanded by higher levels of government. Then, when the commune chief was involved in attempting to dismantle a fence encroaching on land considered by the community to be school land, he was arrested for damage to private property.



The new commune council is now considered to be more trustworthy than the previous one but a number of land deals have continued. A number of villages now have little or no formal access to water sources, toilet areas or to burials areas. Areas fronting main roads are now generally not owned or occupied by Tampuen people.

Under these conditions, community solidarity has been shattered. Now many community development activities are difficult – as people feel defeated and disempowered. Despite this, in recent years, there have been indications that Yeak Laom *may* pick up. Threats to take the lake away from the people has galvanised many people. There is a growing realisation that they need to stay together and re-build their communities if they are to avoid losing what they have left.



Yeak Laom has access to the education and health services available in the provincial capital, Ban Lung. The school in the commune is up to grade 6. High school is available in Ban Lung but only a relatively small number of Tampuen students attend. A number of people reported that, while school is meant to be free, there are always unofficial payments required – to pass significant levels at school. The teaching provided in school is lacking so that students must pay for private tutorials (from the same teachers) in order to get adequate education to pass exams.

The commune has also been the site for English education. Now a significant number of young people speak basic English and some have used that for accessing NGO employment. Others use English to access income from guiding tourists. The English program came as a result of community people seeing their traditional livelihoods dwindling.

A small group of Tampuen people who previously accessed high school and English education and now work with NGOs, have also started a community-based organisation that has been able to access donor funds for a program to support community involvement with the lake. A large meeting hall is being constructed to act as a point for meetings of indigenous peoples from the commune and from around the province. By doing this, people are hoping to attract more support for the ongoing community management of the lake.

Radio: Radio includes the provincial government radio, which has 10 minutes in Tampuen broadcast each day. Radio Free Asia and Voice of America are available as more independent radio although the reception is not very good.

Television: National television service is available in the villages (broadcast from the province) but many people do not access it because of the expense of running a television (only one part of one village has mains electricity from Ban Lung). People have access to television at various public places like coffee shops in Ban Lung.

A significant number of households have DVD and television sets. There are some local language videos and they are much appreciated. Most videos are, however, action videos.

Phones: About 80 percent of people have phones. Elders and women are less likely to have phones. Youth also use phones for music devices. 010, 011, 012, 015, 097 and 098 phones services are strong. People charge phones using batteries or from motorbike batteries. Some villages use generators at night and this is also when phones are charged. An estimated three percent of people can access internet via hand phones.

Audio Devices: 10 percent of people have cassette players, 30 percent have CD players, 50 percent have phones for sound playing. Therefore, about 90 percent have something for listening to audio.

Print Media: Yeak Laom has perhaps the highest literacy rates of indigenous communities in Ratanakiri. Print media, however, is still of low significance to most people. Some information from outside, however, has been coming into the community through the people who work with NGOs. About 5 percent people have been working with an NGO, but they often do not pass information to people in their villages. If they do it is often information about rights – but community solidarity has been a major limiting factor in pushing for these rights.



Media Issues

People strongly want to have Tampuen language media. Solidarity and social/cultural cohesion are seen to be a major problem leading to resource loss. Now, with Yeak Laom Lake challenged, there appears to be a possible revival of community. People would like media services that help reinforce Tampuen culture and identity – as a part of maintaining the cohesion required to keeping the lake under community management.

Key people in the community have expressed concern about the content of media available to the community. A generation gap is developing in the community as modern media messages are enticing some young people into modern ways. With that could come the rising issues of drug use, poor attendance at school, domestic violence and unsafe migration, all of which are of great concern to many within the community.

In many ways Yeak Laom suffers from too much media rather than too little. The issue is that so much of it is not supportive of the community. As in Seoung, community pride and identity are key to keeping their remaining resources. Media could play a role in that – but currently does not. There is also a strong need for information to assist people develop skills and knowledge suited to living on a very much reduced land base. Alternative incomes are required.

Many believe that Yeak Laom will have to become a service base for other indigenous communities. This is already evident with a significant number of Yeak Laom people working in NGOs in Ban Lung. A number of key people have suggested that Yeak Laom could become a centre for supporting community media within the provinces. Outside funding could be secured to allow the relatively highly trained people of Yeak Laom to support other communities in community media production.

People are genuinely interested in media and already can use some formats of media such as phone conversations, texting, listening to radio, watching TV, playing CDs and DVDs, reading book – but they say they don't know how to use them for having voices to influence their lives.

Case study 5: Veal Veng Village, Chhouk Commune, Prasat Sambo District, Kompong Thom

The community

Veal Veng village is located in Kompong Thom province in the north-central area of Cambodia. It is a semi-remote village located approximately 70km from the provincial centre and 20 km from the district centre.

Traditionally the community relies on rotational farming and paddy fields. An important alternative and complementary source of income and building materials has come from neighbouring forest areas. There has been a tradition of sustainable harvesting of tree resin sold for boat sealing and used as a fuel for lamps.



Virtually all people in the village speak their own Kuy language. Most also speak Khmer. Most are Buddhist but practice many aspects of their indigenous culture. According to key informants, there are one hundred other Kuy communities in 4 districts such as Prasat Sambo, Prasat Balang, Sadan and Kg Svay districts, but only 50 villages respect Kuy culture and are able speak Kuy language.

The village layout is different from indigenous community in Ratanakiri. In Ratanakiri, houses are often arranged in a circle with a meeting hall in the centre. The Veal Veng community houses are located along the road for a distance of approximately 1.5 km. Despite the fact there is a communal meeting hall built by the village, the elongated nature of the village makes it difficult for communication as meeting together almost always involves some people having to travel a significant distance.

Veal Veng also has a temple or pagoda where people meet when they have a problem. Ceremonies are sometimes conducted and there is a system of collecting money when there is a problem that needs collective resources.



Sometimes these resources are used to also support vulnerable people in the village. The community consultation teams found that solidarity was strong in the village and this was related to many Kuy people becoming monks. Some have gone on to study at University in Phnom Penh. After graduating they generally continue to be monks in their own district in order to support their people.

Development Issues

Recently Veal Veng Village, like many other Kuy villages in the region, has been challenged with land concessions and anarchic land grabbing. Now the community generally does not have enough farming land for its livelihood.

This has led to a number of the people having to take on wage labour and both labour exploitation and sexual exploitation are reported as major issues. Some young women and men said companies working in the area have cheated them. Other people, especially youth who have left school, have also left to work outside the province and outside the country, especially in Thailand. These issues are of great concern to the community, especially as going out for work has made it easy for some to be involved with illegal drug use.



Community people report that there is a lack of education. Some Kuy communities in the area have lower access to health and education when compared to their non-indigenous neighbours.

There is a primary school situated in the centre of the village for grades 1 to 6. A few Kuy teachers are employed there, but most teachers are Khmer from outside the community. Currently UNESCO is supporting this primary school with some salaries for teachers and by providing food for students every morning. There has also been support for school equipment and student materials.

For education above grade 6, the secondary school is located at the district centre, 45 km away. As a result, only about 10 percent of students will continue to secondary school - usually those from families with sufficient income. Some students from poor families stay at the district Pagoda or have become monks in order to access secondary education. Students report there is discrimination from Khmer students and others. They say they feel looked down upon and are not valued. This issue has caused some students to give up their studies after only one or two years of secondary school.

Village informants estimate that there are about 30 percent of people who can read and write Khmer. Most Kuy people in the village can speak and understand Khmer language very well. The general language of the village is Kuy, but in business they use both Khmer and Kuy. The language is, therefore, not such a key issue to access information for this community.

Media services

Radio: There are many clear radio services from Khampong Thom province. People report not being satisfied with the contents because most radio services do not disclose enough information related to needs, especially with regard to natural resources, land grabbing or human rights – they said they received enough pro-government information and information about health, education and domestic violence, but not enough information on indigenous people's land rights. The local channels are only just music.

Radio Free Asia or Voice of America is listened to for information related to needs. It is still generally just information from around the country, or the world, but is not specifically issues faced by the community, such as mining, land grabbing or sand extraction.

Television: In Veal Veng village about 50 percent of household have small black and white or colour TVs with DVD players. There are many kinds of television services available, most with clear picture and sound. Information is similar to that on the government radio – positive to government, or advertising. Much is about government officers providing gifts to villagers. The main barrier to receiving more television is no electricity or money to buy televisions.

Some Kuy community people use batteries for lighting, charging phones, or for operating media equipment, including radio, TV, DVD players and cassette players. A truck battery can last for one week and can be recharged for approximately 2000 to 3500 Riel per charge.

In the past the community received video discs about culture, mining, land grabbing, and natural resource issues from indigenous communities in Ratanakiri province. In recent times, however, these have not been available. People would very much like more of such videos.

Phones: There are a few phone services in the village - for example like 012 and 011 – which are not strong or not available all of the time. But there is a strong 097 service. The Kuy community use phones for communication with friends, relatives, accessing news, networking and other business. Youth groups are using phones for communication with friends and for listening to music. About 50 percent people have phones. It is women and elderly men who often don't have them – because they have no need, do not like the technology and/or lack the money to buy and use them.

Audio Devices: There are some audio players in the village. Some families use cassette players for listening to music and as radio to receive information from the radio channels. There are many kinds of speakers, normally used for family events and at ceremonies. There is microphone-speaker at the pagoda for announcements during ceremonies.

Print Media: In general, there is lack of print media. Posters, leaflets and newsletters come to the village or are distributed - many are from businesses promoting their services. The Indigenous Community Support Organization (ICSO) has distributed posters and leaflets about indigenous community's culture and communal land titling.

Media Issues

In general, media is in Khmer. Some women and elders do not understand much of the information on radio and TV. Others report that much of the information in Khmer is at a level of Khmer too high/technical for many to understand. Despite this, provision of information in Khmer is not so much of an issue as it is in Ratanakiri. Crucial information could be made available in Khmer and enough people within the community could access it.

Another issue, however, is that people are concerned about losing their culture and language. They want to have media in Kuy language, with particular focus on their culture, natural resources, land grabbing, mining and rights abuses. They want media produced by their communities.

Following the consultation, people in Veal Veng said they would like to also consult with other Kuy communities about how they view the media and information systems they currently have available. People also want to have opportunities to express their voice to others outside their area. They report they have had little access to do this in the past.



Case Study 6: Phnom Ray Village, Tartouk Commune, Samlot District, Battambang province

The Community

Phnom Ray village is the only indigenous village in Battambang province, on the western side of Cambodia. It is a remote village with easier access to towns in Thailand compared to towns in Cambodia. As such, the area was until the early 1990s an area under Khmer Rouge influence. The Por community of more than 100 families have, however, maintained their identity and returned to their traditional areas.



In Phnom Ray, all older people speak Por language. They also speak Khmer. Most young people, however, do not speak Por. About 30 percent of people in the village speak Thai. The community was concerned about the possible loss of their language and would like to have programs to ensure its survival.

Consultations with key informants in the neighbouring province of Pursat found that there were Por people in a total of 16 villages in a total of five communes in that province. That represents approximately 275 families, or about 2000 Por ethnicity people (the Por population of the world).

In Phnom Ray village, most people do rotational farming, not paddy farming. Generally, no paddy land is available. The traditional practice is to clear an area of re-growth forest, grow rice and other crops for a period of 3-5 years then move to another area. Traditionally, this does not involve clearing old growth forest, because farming areas are not ploughed. Forest re-grows and the area is re-used when fertility has returned to the site.

People in the village also rely on forest products. This includes resin collection for sale and for lighting (lamps). Building materials, medicines and wild foods are collected from forest areas.



Most people are Buddhist, but people also believe in traditional Por religious spirits as well. The Buddhist religion is seen as an adaptation to contact with Khmer people; Por religion being the traditional religion. Por ceremonies are still conducted in the village and most people respect elders as carriers of religion. There is a leading elder called *Mekan Treh* who follows traditions from the past, requiring having no haircuts and wearing traditional clothes only.

Development Issues

Some of the traditional lands of the Por people in Phnom Ray under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Environment (Protected Area). In general, traditional farming of indigenous peoples is allowed but some people report that traditional hunting has been restricted.

Of major concern is a land concession in the remaining areas. On 09 January 2009 the Royal Government of Cambodia passed Sub-Decree #08 to transfer 5,200 hectares of land to state private land in order that it be granted as an Economic Land Concession to Rath Sambath Company, for 70 years, for rubber plantation. The Economic Land Concession website of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries lists Ms. Minh Kanhearath, a Khmer national as director of the company and stated that a contract between the MAFF and Rath Sambath was signed on 03 April 2009.

The concession affects 8 villages (including Phnom Ray) from 2 communes. In December 2010 approximately 400 people from the communities protested in the district against the taking of their lands, much of which they had rice and tree crops on. That was at a stage when machines were clearing and road construction has started. The company was report to have taken 2000 hectares and were looking for another 3000 hectares to clear.



Phnom Ray residents report asking for information about the concession, such as the contract and the name of the company director, but that information was denied. They also report that military units are working in collaboration with the company. Large forest areas are being cleared and the logs sold.

Following the protest communities lodged a complaint with the district government which requested that the Phnom Ray community mark the boundary of half of their land to be excluded from the concession. Community people are not happy with this and want all of their lands excluded from the concession, saying that this is what the law says and what they require for their livelihoods.



Only two NGOs work in Phnom Ray. They work on health and domestic violence. There are also a small number of Por people involved in the national indigenous peoples' network (IRAM). These people attend training and meetings mainly focussed on land and natural resource management rights and issues. Some of that has been provided in a train the trainer format so that these focal people can provide rights training and information back to the community. They have also brought in videos about indigenous issues from other areas in Cambodia.

There is a primary school in the village that goes up to grade six. For education at higher grades people have to go to Teok Sok about 10km from the village along a quiet hilly road. There are no formal health services in the village. For health issues, people have to travel 20 km to Samlot District.

Media Services

Radio: Many families have radios. Thai radio has strong signals but only 30 percent of people understand the language. Short Wave services of Radio Free Asia and Voice of America are received, but Cambodian radio services are very weak.

Television: Television from Cambodia does not reach the village, however television from Thailand does. This is only understandable to the 30 percent of people who speak and understand Thai. Televisions are run on battery power as no electricity exists. Four or 5 houses have DVD players with black and white TV.

Phones: Phone service is weak and not present much of the time. A new tower was currently being installed, so service could soon be stronger. People currently use phones for personal issues and contact for personal business. Most people consequentially do not have phones.

Audio Devices: There are few listening devices in the village. There are a few cassette players, but they are mainly used for listening to music. A few phones are also used for listening to music. Radios are the main source for listening to music. A lot of the music that is listened to is in Thai language.

Print Media: Print media is almost absent in Phnom Ray village. Few or no newspapers or magazines arrive in the village. A number of NGOs have provided posters related to malaria, bird flu, landmines and elections. They have also received a small number of story books about indigenous issues (from Ratanakiri – in Khmer).

Media Issues:

People want to have a local language media service to help maintain Por language. People also want better services in Khmer language. They want information about their rights, especially about natural resource management rights. They want media to support their cultural and language survival.



Case Study 7: Yeav Village, Kompong Cham Commune, Sambour District, Kratie province

The community

It takes 30 minutes by car from the provincial centre of Kratie to Sambour District, then, a ferry ride from there a small ferry across the river to Yeav on the eastern side of the Mekong River, briefly stopping at the islands in the Mekong before arriving on the western side of the river.

Yeav village extends along the Mekong River for about 8km. A small gravel road slightly back from the river has houses scattered either side. Between the river and the road, apart from houses are fruit trees and gardens. Buffalo and cows are tethered under the houses at night. Ducks and chicken roam freely. Pigs are tethered or caged.

Extending to the west, away from the river and road are rice fields. In most areas they are lowland rice paddies, but in some areas, where there are small rises or hills, dryland rice and vegetables are grown. Beyond the rice field are the outer edges of Prey Lang, the largest remaining lowland evergreen forest in South-east Asia.

The village is actually better described as a Khmer village. Most people identify as Khmer people. A few say they are of Kuy ancestry but there is no one left who speaks Kouy. People follow Buddhism but many people also believe in Kuy forest spirits. Belief in spirits is also a characteristic of Khmer people, but Kuy spirits are seen to be different spirits and reside more often in natural resources.

Most people are rice paddy farmers with additional income from forest produce and from work on small-scale gold mines in the forest area. Some families have members living and working in the District centre across the river. Fisheries were once more plentiful, but now in decline due to illegal fishing. Some people also said that they are now banned from having nets – a conservation measure for the Irrawaddy dolphin found predominantly in this section of the Mekong River. They can actually be imprisoned if caught using nets near the pools.

Despite the once abundant resources, people are generally poor. Few services make it across the river to the western side. There are few NGOs that operate in or visiting the village. It is basically only one NGO that helps with small income generation projects.

The community is Buddhist, with construction of a village Wat (temple) begun in 2007. The village chief said this was done because community solidarity was low. A Wat would help to bring people together from along the long village. Unlike Wats in other places of Cambodia, Yeav village Wat has no large benefactor. All donations for the slow construction of the Wat have come from the community.

Development Issues

There is a primary school in the village and the High school is across the river at Sambour. Many of the students in high school need to study tutorials after school and stay in the district during



the week. Many students stay in the Sambour district Wat. Some stay with relatives. They come back to the village on the weekend. It is considered costly to take the ferry back and forth each day (\$0.5/day).

Major problems started in 2003, with a rubber concession issued by the national government. It was resisted by the community and activities were stopped. But the company started again in 2007, coming in from the west, clearing forest areas and taking people's rice paddies.



With regard to these issues, most people have a very low understanding of their legal rights. A small number of focal people attend community network meetings with other community people from around Prey Lang. A number of people in Yeav said the focal people go off to meetings outside of the commune but do not relay much information to them. The community focal people said it was hard to work with the Yeav village community because community solidarity is generally not strong.

Media Services

Radio: The provincial radio signal is strong in the village but not in the forested areas. It is like other government radio services and does not provide much information on rights. Radio Free Asia and Voice of America are received and provide information about natural resource management issues – but not rights education. It is mainly older people who will listen to these services, but they will often transfer the information to others.

Television: Television signals are not generally received, but some get Bayon TV. It is not considered a high priority because of the content and because of the poor signal. A few families have Digital TV by satellite (DTV) and other watch that service, especially at a few coffee shops with generators. The DTV service was reported to cost US\$80 to set up but with no other fees. Still it is a high cost for a family.

Many families have battery-powered TVs with DVD players. Thai soap operas dubbed into Khmer are favoured. Viewing is at night time.

Phones: Mobile phone services are strong in signal and many are available. Phones are used for logistical arrangements and contacting friends and family. For those that work in the forest or in the mining areas, phone services are not available.

Audio Devices: Many families have CD or cassette players. These are used primarily for listening to Khmer music. The Wat has a sound system that is used for community celebrations and for announcements.

Print Media: Print media is scant in Yeav. This is particularly so because of the low number of NGOs operating in the village and also the low literacy rates. Despite this, people going out to the district (a short boat ride) have access to newspapers and other documents. Again, most of the written information on development issues comes through local authorities.

Media Issues

Despite being a short ferry ride over the Mekong River from the district centre of Sambour, residents of Yeav say they feel like a forgotten village. They said that the western side of the river is not as well serviced as the eastern side (where the district and provincial centres are located). NGOs are said to not visit often.

The village illustrates how community solidarity is major factor and concern. Land is being taken and it is only community resistance and protest that can keep it. In Yeav, there has been community resistance but that has weakened following the aggressive actions of land concessionaires. The village faces inherent issues with internal communication, the community being spread out along the road and river. The media situation has done little if anything to improve communication, both within the community and with the outside. People would like to use community media as a tool in supporting community identity and communication.

Case Study 8: Kordontey village, Trapeang Chor commune, Oral District, Kompung Speu

The Community

The Suy people have one of the lowest populations of any indigenous groups in Cambodia, numbering only an estimated 1,200 people. According to Suy informants, there are only ten Suy communities in Cambodia and thus only 10 in the world³⁴.

The majority of the Suy people, about 900 people, live in five villages in Trapeang Chor commune, O Ral District, Kompong Speu Province. Those villages are: Putrea, Ta Nel, Kordontey, Traang, and Chambak. The five villages formerly constituted Chh'en commune. However due to its relatively low population, the Cambodian authorities decided to incorporate the commune into Trapeang Chor commune, whose population is primarily Khmer, the dominant ethnicity of Cambodia (other Suy people live dispersed amongst Khmer villages).



Kordontey was the village consulted in February 2011. Almost all people in Kordontey are Suy people with some Khmer who have come recently to operate small business within the community.

Most older people speak both Khmer and Suy languages. Khmer as often the first language but Suy is used for communication amongst older people. About 20% of young people speak Suy. . Many youth, however, are currently learning to sing and dance to Suy songs, they being taught by the elders most weeknights.

People do not do rotational farming as in Ratanakiri. They cultivate the paddy rice fields and have farms with corn, tobacco, bean and other vegetables for their daily needs. All the people in the community own a plot of land to grow rice and often have several cows. Some families own a tractor machine (Kor youn) for cultivation and for transporting supplies.

The people of Kordontey hold both traditional and Buddhist beliefs. There are monks and a pagoda in the community but people also pray to the animist spirits when their family members are not well.



³⁴ *The so-called Suoy people of Thailand and Laos, known also as the Kui, are a different people.*

Development Issues

The community is located in an area under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Environment. The Mount O Ral Wildlife Sanctuary, established in 1997, includes the five core villages, along with their agricultural land, resin trees, and other customary-use forest. Also located within the Sanctuary were four Suy spirit forests and a sacred hot springs, home of the Suy goddess Yeay Te, whose powers are recognized by Suy and Cambodians alike. The Suy have built a statue of Yeay Te at the springs and hold regular ceremonies to honour her.

In 2007, the Minister of Environment approved the allocation of 3087 hectares of land to the Suy people. This land is divided into three parts: forestry land, reserve forest and land for the residents. Almost all people depend on this land and forest to survive. For their daily food, they go to the forest and rice fields.

In early 2004, an NGO began discussing the development of a community-based eco-tourism to manage the hot springs and generate community income. A conservation NGO and the Ministries of Environment and Tourism, were also involved in the project. In spite of this, in May 2004 the Cambodian government granted a 75-year, 900 hectare tourism concession for the hot springs and surrounding area to a Chinese company named New Cosmos.

Although the concession was described as an eco-tourism project, the company was to develop a large modern resort and golf course. In October 2004 the groups involved with the community-based eco-tourism project were ordered to stop their activities. In late 2004, the five communities petitioned the government to return the land. There was no response. Community leaders continued to speak out. Elders guarded the statue of Yeay Te, so that the company wouldn't remove it. Community members, especially leaders, were subsequently threatened. Community members at one time stood in front of a company truck to block the development of the concession.

After the death of the company director, and perhaps in-part as a result of community advocacy, in 2005, New Cosmos suspended its operation; company equipment and workers were removed from the site. However, the concession agreement itself was never rescinded and has remained a threat hanging over the Suy people.

Since then, there have been more companies seeking land

In 2009, a government sub-decree, dated March 30, 2009 transferred the land from State Public property to State Private Property, effectively removing it from the O Ral Wildlife Sanctuary. An area of 9,985 hectares surrounding the five Suy villages was granted as a concession to the Singaporean company HLH Group Limited. The concession, for a period of 70 years, was granted for "investment development of the agro-industrial sector". HLH grow and process genetically modified corn.

When the company began clearing forest in June 2009, more than 400 Suy community members, the majority women, blocked the tractors, causing the company to pull-out temporarily. Since the inception of concession activities, two Suy villages have lost at least 25 hectares of recognised community forest to company clearing.



Suy communities have continued to resist company encroachment on their traditional lands. On 21-22 December 2009, more than 100 Suy community members requested that the company cease road construction that would cross Suy land and violate their forests. Villagers arranged a night watch - to prevent the company from clearing land. The next day, an O Ral District deputy governor intervened and the company withdrew to another area.

As the company pushes forward with its development, a concern for the Suy communities is water availability. Even before the concession the area had suffered water shortages. Because the concession encompasses all 23 streams which feed local farms, communities fear that they will have inadequate water for their own use. In fact, the company's own EIA indicated that water availability is low and that they expect to divert water from the largest streams. Community fears began to be realized in late January 2010, when the company constructed an irrigation channel diverting water from a stream which feeds Suy farms. Seventy-nine Suy community members, accompanied by commune officers, confronted the company, demanding that they halt work on the irrigation channel.

As a result of these efforts to protect their lands, and perhaps because of a report to the UN Committee on the Covenant on Elimination of Racial Discrimination in 2010, there was a review of the concession, the community getting back the 3,087 hectares of the land that had been agreed to by the Minister of Environment in 2007

Other concessions nearby also include those to Ly Yong Phat (plan surgar can) and Hello wood both for large scale sugar cane development.

The community also report that, this year, more and more people inside and outside the village cut and sell fire-wood. People are concerned about this and are calling for help to solve this problem.

With regard to education services there are schools in the commune from grades 1 to 9. For grades 10-12 people must go to the District centre 25 kilometres away.



Media Services

Radio: Many families have radios. The national radio signal is not strong here but there is other FM radio signal here which is listenable - such as FM102- FM105- FM99.00. There is also VOA and RFA.

Television: There are some families who have black and white TV but run from batteries - but people rarely use them. Most times people will go to watch TV in the evenings at the two coffee shops with the colour TV, run from a generator, where they can also charge their phones. The cost of coffee is 1500r but some people can watch without buying coffee.

Phones: About 50% of people in the village have a phone. 012- 092 -017-077 Phone service is weak, but Met-phone (097-088) service is strong. People use phones for personal issues, for personal business and for community work. Some youth also use phones to listen to music, watch Videos and listening to the radio. Among the youth in the village a boy who studying in grade 11 at the high school in the district uses his phone connected to big battery-powered speakers with battery for playing party and dance music.

Audio Devices: There are few listening devices in the village. There are a few cassette players, but they are mainly used for listening to music. Radios are also the source for listening to music and news.

Print Media: There is little print media in the community. Few or no newspapers or magazines arrive in the village. A number of NGOs have provided posters related to malaria, bird flu, mother health and elections.



Media Issues:

People want to have a local language media service to help maintain Suy language and Suy culture. They want more Suy people in government positions so they get more information and support.

People want better services on national radio. They also want more programs about indigenous peoples in other areas, about agriculture, culture, natural resource management and strategies to maintain land.

People also want information about their rights, especially about natural resource management rights.



there is a “Sala Chhatian” initiated by monks and built by community members. There is also a Pagoda where people can meet when they have issues to discuss.

Development Issues

Unlike many indigenous communities in other areas of Cambodia, O’long Village has not seen land grabbing or land concessions. People, however, are concerned about the greater Prey Lang area, on which they greatly depend.

Prey Lang and its border areas support roughly 3,600 square kilometres of forests, including a nearly pristine 80,000-100,000 hectare core area. The forest includes seven distinct kinds of ecosystems including unique, primordial swamp forests as well as dry evergreen, semi-evergreen, and deciduous forests.

Prey Lang’s biodiversity values are exceptionally high. It is populated with rare species endemic to Cambodia, including giant luxury timber trees, more than 20 endangered plant species, and as many as 27 endangered animal species.

As a primary watershed, regulating water and sediment flow to the Tonle Sap Basin and as an important spawning area for fish, Prey Lang is vital to Cambodia’s long-term environmental sustainability and people’s food and water security.

Previously classified as state forest, the government has reclassified much of the broader forest area as State Private Land, making it available for land concessions. During the 1990s, the entire forest was divided into logging concessions. In 2003-2004, after public outcry and donor pressure over unsustainable logging throughout the country, most of Prey Lang’s remaining logging concessions were suspended.

More recently, concessions for mines and agro-industrial plantations threaten the viability of the forest, as more areas are converted to industrial purposes. As of early 2010, at least 27 mineral exploration licenses and concessions were known to have been awarded for the greater Prey Lang area. Rubber plantations are also being expanded from the southeast and southwest. None of these projects has been undertaken with the full free, prior, and informed consent of the indigenous people whose customary lands will be affected by new developments.

In recently there have been a few local and international NGOs working with this Kuy community focusing on community media, culture, indigenous rights and natural resource management. Community representative who participate in outside meetings were said to feedback well to their community.

Normally, when NGOs or local authorities request a meeting it is women, elders and youth who participate. This is because most men are busy and away from village for hunting and collecting forest products such as resin for sale.

In the past there were many houses made of wood with roofs of palm leaf. Recently, however, this has changed to new style house of wood with zinc roofs. These changes have come from harvesting forest products, farming and livestock selling. As yet, no-one has sold land to outsiders People have



heard about issues land loss by indigenous people in Ratanakiri province through their representatives attend meetings in Phnom Penh and through reading a story book called Sao Family Book distribute by Indigenous Community Support Organisation (ICSO). Generally the Kuy community people in O'long say they have enough land for farming and for complementing their livelihoods needs.

Recently desire for outside income has been growing. Some illegal logging has started - by individuals within community and from outsider. A number of the people have started taking on labouring work. A number of young people and women said that labour exploitation and sexual exploitation have become hot issues. They continued that lack of media information exacerbate the problem. Women said if there was adequate information, many of the problems could be prevented.

Elders expressed strong concern about their young generation. They said youth seemed do not know who they are. They are fast adopting new, outside fashion culture and it is difficult for the Kuy community to maintain their traditional systems. To address this, a community group was organized to research and consult with neighbouring villages about community organizing.

The Kuy community in the O'long village said they had lower access to health and education services than their non-indigenous neighbours. There is a Health Centre at Siem Bouk District, across the Mekong River. When people are ill, they normally use a private pharmacy in the village and rely on Traditional Birth Attendants (TBA). In cases where people cannot treated by the village pharmacy or the board at Siem Bouk district, there is equity fund available, supported by Action for Health in cooperation with Provincial Department of Health, but this fund is limited cannot support all community members.

With regard to education, there is a preschool initiative established by Oxfam, but the teacher reported that there was no support following the creation and that there are few student materials or other supplies.

In O'long village also there is a primary school situated in the centre of the village which is for grades one to six.. For lower secondary school go to a neighbouring commune, Koh Preah or to the Siam Bouk district centre situated other side of Mekong River about four kilometres away. In this case, students ride by boat every morning to school, sometimes arriving late because they need to wait for their parents to be ready for fishing. As a result, fewer than 10% of students continue to secondary school - usually those from families with higher incomes.

For higher secondary school (grades 9-12), the nearest school is in Stung Treng Province. Only five students are currently studying there and they report discrimination from Khmer students and others.

Media services

Radio: There are only two provincial radio channels with clear services. The Kuy Community report not being satisfied with the content saying they do not disclose enough information related to needs, especially with regard to traditional culture. Community people say they receive enough pro-government information and information about health, education and domestic violence, but lack of information on indigenous people's issues and land rights.

Older people say they often listen to Radio Free Asia or Voice of American because those services have information related to the needs of community, but also lots of information from

around the country and world not specific to the traditional culture and natural resources management issues faced by the community.

Television: In O'long village about 20% of households have small black and white or colour TV sets with DVD players. There are also eight DTV satellite TV receivers in the community. There are many kinds of television services available, most with clear picture and sound. Information is similar to that on the government radio - positive to government, or advertising. Much is about government officers providing gifts to villagers.

The main barrier to using television is no electricity or lack of money to buy television sets or satellite dishes. Some of Kuy community people use batteries and generators for lighting, charging phones, or for operating media equipment including radio, TV, DVD players and Cassette players.

The community said they had received video discs about culture, mining, land grabbing, and natural resource issues from indigenous communities in Ratanakiri province but in recent times, however, these have not been available. People would very much like more of these sorts of videos.

Phones: There are many kinds of phone services available The community said Metfone (097) has the strongest service followed by Cell Card (012) and then other services like Mfone and Beeline, which are not strong or not available all of the time. The Kuy community use phones for communication with friends, relatives, accessing news, networking and for business. The main objective of youth using phones is for communication with friends and for listening to music. About 70% people have phones. It is women and older men, who often don't have them – because they do not have a need for them or do not like the technology.

Audio Devices: There is small amount of sound players in the village. We are seeing some family use cassette players for listening to music and as radio to receive information from the radio channels. There are many kinds of speakers, normally used for family events and at ceremonies.

Print Media: In general, in O'long village, there is a lack of print media. Some posters, leaflets and newsletters come to village or are distributed but most are from the , business sector, promoting their services. The community said because the village is very remote and difficult to access. Only Indigenous Community Support Organization (ICSO) has distributed story books about the impacts of land selling.

Media Issues

In general, media is in Khmer but this is not so much of an issue as it is in Ratanakiri. The community, however, are concerned about losing their culture and language. They want to have media in Kuy language, with particularly focus on their culture, natural resources and on human rights abuse issues such as labour and sexual exploitation. They also want media produced by their communities with women make most of the decisions about this.

People in O'long village also want to consult with other Kuy communities about how they view the media and information systems currently available to them.

People want to have opportunities to express their voice to others outside their area. They report they currently and in the past have had little access to do this.

Case Study 10: Bousra Commune, Pech Chenda District, Mondolkiri Province.

The community

The 7 villages of Bousra commune are located in Mondolkiri in the eastern highlands, 40 kilometres from the provincial centre. The commune has a total population of approximately 4500 people. Traditionally the Bunong people rely on upland farming and non-timber forest products, and also reside in Kratie province and in neighbouring areas of Vietnam.

Traditionally, the Bunong people are animist, but now some community people in are Buddhist, Christians or follow Preah Sen religion. Traditionally elders held a key role in community life but elders are not so influential - because external culture has come in, leading many community people, particularly youth, to stop accepting village elders authority. In the past too, people relied on traditional health systems involving sacrifices and ceremonies to the spirits. Many of these systems remain in place and are used if modern medicine does not prove effective.

Most people in Bousra speak Bunong as their first language, but only about 30% speak Khmer as well. Some people also speak Vietnamese.

Development Issues

The Bunong people of Bousra commune were catapulted into the media limelight on 22 December 2008, after 400 demonstrators had set fire to tractors and excavators belonging to Socfin-KCD Company. The joint venture was set up between an important group of rubber planters operating among others in Africa and Indonesia – and which parent company, Socfinal, is registered in tax haven Luxembourg – and Cambodian company Khaou Chuly Development (KCD). It was granted an economic land concession by the Cambodian government to start a rubber plantation in Mondolkiri that partly overlaps with the land of the Bunong indigenous community of Bousra.

The December 2008 incident was the result of accumulated incomprehension, humiliation and anger. Eight months earlier, in April 2008, Khaou Chuly bulldozers started clearing land without the villagers being notified first, neither by the company or the local authorities. The provincial governor was called for help by the Bunong, who have been living on the land for generations.

A few weeks away from national elections, the authorities sought to appease the villagers. The National Authority for Land Dispute Resolution promised that some of the land would be returned, but the promise was left unkept. “If you



don't sell now, the company will take your land anyway," several villagers reported being told. With the support of armed forces who maintained pressure, Khaou Chuly quickly earned a reputation for violence and unscrupulousness.

Many families took the small financial compensation that was offered. Two other options were offered - to obtain plots of land of equivalent size elsewhere, either to cultivate crops as people used to, or to cultivate rubber, as part of a project of family rubber plantations. They were not understood notably because many meetings took place in the Khmer language and not in the Bunong language, which meant the discussions were out of reach for most villagers. Bousra residents worried about being moved to the land of other Bunong villages or unknown owners with whom they did not want any trouble. They also had no guarantee as to when exactly they would receive new plots of land, so they declined to be resettled and preferred financial compensation.

In recent times, the concessions have been expanding. In addition to the Socfin KCD concession are Varanasy, Setheikola, and Koviphama company plantations. The total area of land under rubber has expanded to around 10,000 hectares, employing approximately 2,000 people, about 600 of whom are indigenous people. Despite some employment, most Bunong people do not want the concessions and would rather retain their traditional land area.

In Bousra commune there is a primary school and a lower secondary school located central to the 7 villages (the most distant village is 4km away). However, there are still problems for education because people are poor and their children are often forced to leave school and work on their family's farms

There is a commune health centre in Bousra however a number of people said the quality was not good. A referral hospital is present in the provincial centre 40 kilometres away.

Media Services

Radio: Radio is a main broadcast media to the community. People receive radio stations such as VOA, FRA, national radio and Bayon radio or Vietnamese radio airing some content in Bunong language. The most popular radio station, however, is the national radio, Bayon. Programs are Khmer language meaning 70-80% of people cannot understand them well. Of the content that can be understood people appreciated programs on agriculture, songs, drama or art performance.

Television: TV channels are the national broadcaster, TVK and Bayon, plus TV from Vietnam. Approximately 10-20% of community people have televisions, which are viewed by others as well - 40% of people accessed information through TV broadcasts, even though understanding is



low because the broadcasts are in Khmer language. There was a strong request for TV or videos in Bunong language.

People said there is no Karaoke in their community, but there are sometimes educational videos related to Bunong culture and health. These are produced and played by outsiders, especially by people from NGOs' and government departments. The language generally used in the videos is Khmer. About 40% of people with televisions also have VCD/DVD players.

Phones: Nearly 90% of adults in Bousra commune have hand phones. The services available in the commune are Metphone (097), Camsin (011) and Mobitel (012). People use their phone for communications with their friends, lovers and family members. Most people are unable to use the phones apart from the most basic use but expressed the desire to know how to use for listening to music and sending messages.

Audio Devices: There are 10% or less of families using cassette players. They are mainly used for listening to music. Radios are also the source for listening to music and news.

70% of people have players for audio CDs or for playing VCDs.

Print Media: There is little print media in the community. Few or no newspapers or magazines arrive in the village. A number of NGOs have provided posters related to malaria, bird flu, mother health and elections.

Media Issues:

Word-of-mouth communication in Bunong language is the main means for discussion of issues related to culture and natural resource conservation. People feel that much of the information and media they receive is not suited to their needs because it is not in a language they can readily understand.

Many of the issues related to media are new to the people in Bousra and they would like to learn more about the field.



List of acronyms

2G	Second generation technology
3G	Third generation technology
ADB	Asian Development Bank
ABC	Australian Broadcasting Corporation
AIPP	Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact
AWD	Acute Watery Diarrhoea
BCV	Building Community Voices
C4E	Communication for empowerment
CCHR	Cambodian Center for Human Rights
CED	Community Economic Developm
CHRAC	Cambodian Human Rights Action Committee
CIYA	Cambodian Indigenous Youth Association
CPP	Cambodian People's Party
DVD	Digital Video Disk
FMV	Forest Mountain Voices
GMS	Greater Mekong Subregion
HA	Highlander Association
HRTF	Housing Rights Task Force
IADC	Indigenous Agriculture Development Cambodia
ICC	International Cooperation Committee
ICCO	Dutch Inter-church development agency
ICERD	International Covenant on Elimination of Racial Discrimination
ICSO	Indigenous Community Support Organisation
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IPWG	Indigenous Peoples Working Group
IRAM	Indigenous Rights Active Members
IYDP	Indigenous Youth Development Project
LICADHO	Cambodian League for the Promotion and Defence of Human Rights
NGO	Non Government Organisation
NTPF	Non Timber Forest Products

PRGO	Poverty Reduction Growth Operati
RCAF	Royal Cambodian Armed Forces
RFA	Radio Free Asia
RNRMN	Ratanakiri Natural Resource Management Network
SNC	Supreme National Council
TTK	Cambodian State Television.
TV	Television
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNDRIP	United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
USB	Universal Serial Bus
UNTAC	United Nations Transitional Authority
VOA	Voice Of America
WHO	World Health Organisation
WMC	Women's Media Centre

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